

Volume 5
The Loves of
Rādhā and Krishna
and Amores of
Amaru and Mayūra



YAWAP SALAR JUNG BAHALUP

EASTERN LOVE



THE LOVES OF RĀDHĀ AND KRISHNA AND AMORES

ENGLISH VERSIONS FROM
THE BENGALI OF CHANDĪDĀSA
AND FROM THE SANSKRIT
OF AMARU AND MAYŪRA BY
E. POWYS MATHERS

VOLUME V

JOHN RODKER
FOR SUBSCRIBERS
LONDON, 1928

for
D. V.

MADE IN ENGLAND

THIS EDITION OF CHANDĪDĀSA FROM THE BENGALI, AND AMARU AND MAYŪRA FROM THE SANSKRIT, BEING VOLUME 5 OF "EASTERN LOVE," IS HERE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST TIME, BY E. POWYS MATHERS. THE EDITION OF 1,000 COPIES ON ALL RAG PAPER WAS PRINTED BY RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LTD., BUNGAY, SUFFOLK. THE COPPER PLATE ENGRAVINGS ARE BY HESTER SAINSBURY AND HAVE BEEN HAND PRINTED AND HAND COLOURED BY MESSRS. A. ALEXANDER AND SONS, LTD. FOR THE NUMBER OF THIS SET SEE VOLUME I

CONTENTS

The Loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

Introductory Note xi

Part One. Dawn 1

Part Two. Rāsalilā 63

Part Three. The Journey to Mathura 99

Part Four. Reunion 125

Notes 134

Amores of Amaru and Mayūra 137

Introductory Note 139

Amaru

Man 145

Woman 154

Man and Woman 160

Woman and Woman 164

Observation 168

Mayūra 177

*The Loves of
Rādhā and Krishna
from the Bengali
of Chāṇḍīdāsa*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

BENGAL has always been the home of sensuous mysticism, and Chandīdāsa, the first great vernacular poet of Bengal, was intensely a lover and a mystic. His date was about 1400 A.D.; we know at least, on the evidence of one of his poems, that he had composed 996 songs before the year 1403. He was born in Chhātānā in the Birbhum district, but moved in early life to the neighbouring village of Nānnura, ten miles to the south-east of Bolpur, where a mound is still exhibited as the site of his house. There he discharged priestly functions in the temple of Vāsulī Devī, until proclaimed by beat of drum to have "fallen from the Brahmanic order" because he loved Rāmi, a washer-girl. In spite of attempts at reinstatement by his brother Nakula, Chandīdāsa remained for the rest of his life an outcast, known in affection among the villagers as mad Chandī, and was killed, singing his latest songs, by the collapse of a house roof.

The majority of Chandīdāsa's songs, other than those composed for Rāmi, deal with the love of Rādhā for Krishna. They sound that note in the intellectual life of his time of the soul turning in on itself to brood over the love of God for Man and of Man for God. R. W. Fraser says that Chandīdāsa sang a "wail of love in which the soul, personified as Rādhā, pours forth his love for the Divine, incarnate in Krishna."

Briefly it may be said that, while the language of the

people was still groping among unconscious folk pastoral the vernaculars of Bengal and Behar were suddenly enhanced by two men of universal genius, Chandīdāsa and Vidyāpati, precursors of the great Bengali constellation of the sixteenth century.

The significance of Chandīdāsa's songs with reference to Vaiṣṇava theology, to the manifold interpretations of erotic themes in Indian religious literature, and to the poetry of sex in general are dealt with in the Essay at the end of this series.

I have translated from a most satisfactory French linking and shortening of Chandīdāsa's songs by Man'ha, published last year; but have allowed myself an occasional divergence suggested by a friend who examined the original text for me.

PART
I
DAWN

people was still groping among unconscious folk pastoral, the vernaculars of Bengal and Behar were suddenly enhanced by two men of universal genius, Chandīdāsa and Vidyāpati, precursors of the great Bengali constellation of the sixteenth century.

The significance of Chandīdāsa's songs with reference to Vaiṣṇava theology, to the manifold interpretations of erotic themes in Indian religious literature, and to the poetry of sex in general are dealt with in the Essay at the end of this series.

I have translated from a most satisfactory French linking and shortening of Chandīdāsa's songs by Man'ba, published last year; but have allowed myself an occasional divergence suggested by a friend who examined the original text for me.

PART
I
DAWN

HARI,* THE SON OF NANDA, SITTING ONE day in the shadow of a tree with his companions and keeping his herd of cows, said after silence, looking upon his friend Subala :

‘ Tell me what I must do, and why my heart is hot ; for I cannot bear it. What ill is burning out my life ? Listen to me, and expound my suffering.’

‘ The pain is in your heart,’ answered Subala.

‘ What more can I say of it than that ? A vision has taken your glances unaware.’

Krishna said : ‘ I am about to translate what passes in my heart. Yet my vision was so deep that a confused trouble as of flames followed upon it. Show me some cure, for my body is a prey to sorrow, and knows no respite.

‘ Yesterday Dhavalī, the white cow, wandered unseen toward the forest by Brikvanupur. I sought her in many places. I followed the prints of her feet through the woods of Brikvanu. Dhavalī had joined with the cows of another.

‘ That which I then saw is now unsayable, and my heart is overwhelmed in telling. I saw her, as soft as a shadow, leaving the royal house of Brikvanu.

‘ She went with a friend and bore a gold jar at

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

her hip, the aureole of her beauty shone like a thousand moons, an unstill radiance brightened from her face.

‘I saw her as in a dream, and she shook my life.’

O Yadunatua, says the poet Chandīdāsa, the hour will come when you shall understand this mystery.

Chandīdāsa

II

‘ SHE departed, a figurine of gold, and plunged me into nameless trouble.

‘ She wore a blue sārī ; her belly gave itself to be guessed through her garment ; her beauty broke forth like light by all her veils.

‘ How shall I tell of her ? Her glances were ever moving, and knew no rest. She wore so many and so costly ornaments, it seemed as if a thousand gold bees had alighted upon her.

‘ When she walked, I knew the gliding of a wild swan across the waters.

‘ The music of her gold rings sent up the fifth note of the scale from her slim ankles, and was as suave as honey.

‘ She balanced carelessly as she passed by. She balanced carelessly.

‘ We could have seized her lioness waist between our hands as if it had been the neck of a water jar.

‘ That is the image of delight I saw with my own eyes. When she laughed, a nectar seemed to fall from her eyelids in a hundred drops.’

It is thus, says the poet Chandīdāsa, that the Princess showed to Krishna.

Rādhā and Kṛishṇa

III

‘I saw her, and the character of her beauty beat upon my soul. After she had looked at me, I lost all knowledge.

‘I returned, leading Dhavalī, the white cow. Subala, are you listening?’

‘When shall I see that miracle again? It is something new to the world. Subala, my friend, can you hear me?’

‘Ah, who can understand my grief? For I am so cast away. When this meeting returns suddenly, to whom may I tell it?’

‘Since yesterday a thing, born in the deep of my heart, torments my life.

‘I know not hunger or thirst. Weariness is far from me when I lie down. I have the same dream, and sometimes my soul is heavy.

‘What is this thing in my corroded heart? My life has become as a mad elephant. The harmony of my soul is shattered.’

O Prince of Love, says the poet Chandidāsa, you shall see her again, you shall touch her with your hands; of that you may be certain.

Chandīdāsa

IV

‘HER glance came forth like the light of a cloud. She mingled with her companions, and they followed her.

‘She wore a collar of pearl. Her deep glances combined a multitude of diverse colours and intentions. The hornet dashed himself towards the perfume of her body with the booming of a vibrant bell.

‘Sometimes she lifted a fold of her sārī, then covered herself again with a quick movement. She leaned upon the shoulder of her companion with a gesture of tenderness, and was curious of that which passed by.

‘She showed me her laughing glance, and I lost my soul to it. Tints played about her to the rhythm of her steps, and each drew forth my life.

‘Moonlike clarity shone from the ends of her fingers. She killed the souls of those she looked upon. The arrow of her glances pierced my flank, then ploughed a red way to my breast. Yet my heart was so stirred that I never felt it. I was lost when I saw her.

‘I saw her leaning upon the shoulder of her companion and passing along the road. She

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

showed forth the works of Madana, the god of love.

‘ She glanced with laughter.

‘ Friend of my heart, is it possible that I shall ever clasp her ?

‘ Her long collar of blue pearl, falling upon her robe, girded her beauty. The new moon is girded with a net of stars.

‘ Her breasts were two gold cups turned down. How did God make them ?

‘ Ah, let her wish to make me an offering of all her laughters, and of the joy which abides within her !

• • •

‘ I saw this miracle decked with her jewels and the light of her eyes. My patience will not much longer remain my patience.

‘ O tender friend, her regard was full of sorcery, and shook my reason.

‘ Her face was as a weeping cup, was as a love snare.

‘ She kissed the end of her hair, then, twisting her body twice to catch at it, she set it high again upon her neck.

‘ She held her falling sārī with one finger, and, seeing this, we fell a prey to all temptation. Madana himself grew enviously sad.

‘ How can I hold my heart ? This girl, appearing to me with her hair upon the bank of the river, has taken away my weapons.

Chandīdāsa

‘She was immaculate. Her teeth caused us to dream of pearl last night, and when she laughed it was as if the moon came out of her mouth.

‘My soul was mad. Her beauty broke up the sea of my heart by mirroring within it. The vile envelope of my being alone remained to me, for the life of my soul has fled away with her.

‘I saw her passing along the road in day’s decline, and my eyes knew a contentment. I did not recognise her. Who would have dared to look steadily upon such a one?’

‘The beauty of her sārī added but little to her grace ; her grace ennobled all her jewels.

She wore a ring upon her left ring-finger, and carried a gold cup in her hand.

‘The division of her hair was tinted with vermilion, her eyes were underlined with a blue kohl. Pearl pendants beautified each nostril. The clinging of her azure sārī showed me the line of her body in profile.

‘Who has my heart? I have consecrated it to the feet of this girl, and would be her slave. Her breasts outstand like hills; her gold cup shines in my spirit.

' She looked slowly. She stepped lightly.

‘She did not dare to let her glances linger upon me because of her companions, for she is noble.

‘ There is no image possible of her movement.

Rādbā and Kṛishna

‘ She walked in peace.

‘ Who has prayed long to the Lord of Umā *
that he might obtain her? To whom has she
been accorded?

‘ The light of her face is moonrise, making the
soul tremble and the dark afraid.

‘ Who would dare to compare her breasts with
the fruit of the bel tree?

‘ Her collar of gold pearl, shining with light
borrowed from her, fell to her knees. It was
as long as the unrolled trunk of a royal
elephant.

‘ It was a chain to bind young men. Madana
was confused, and did not venture to lift up
his face.

‘ Gold bracelets were about her wrists.

‘ Her waist was as the waist of a lioness, the
curve of a domri *.

‘ Her croup was as a chariot wheel.

‘ The hornets rebounded from the lotus of her
feet, and made her flying anklets.

‘ Her toes, tinted with gum-lac, were more than
sunshine.

‘ I could not look upon her body.

‘ My friend, tell me who is this young unknown
with the gilded colouring?

‘ I saw her bathing in the ghat.

Chandīdāsa

‘ O confidant of mine, listen to what like this girl was as she washed.

‘ She sat down upon the bank of the Yamunā, her legs were crossed in the water ; she sat down upon her sārī, which she had taken off.

‘ Her gold collar balanced beneath her naked breasts, the ridges of the hills of Sumēru.

‘ When she rose after her bathing, her hair fell to the hollow of her back ; the darkness wept and went to find shelter and help behind the moon.

‘ The shell forms of her bracelets flamed like the slim crescent of the moon, when she rises against twilight.

‘ She went away upon the bank of the river Yamunā, twisting my soul into her blue sārī, and now peace dwells at the other end of the earth from my great fever.’

O Nagar, says the poet Chandīdāsa, learn, in the name of Vāsulī, that this girl is the daughter of the King of Brikvanu and is called Rādhā.

Subala, his companion, to prove that he has understood the suffering of Krishna, promises to bring him into the presence of Rādhā.

Rādhā and Krishna

SUBALĀ becomes incarnate in the form of Krishna. He grows of a beauty without rival, appearing like the thick cloud formed upon the sky.

His body is the colour of blue kohl, of the blue atasī, of blue lotuses, the colour of adoration.

He is like a garland of nelumbos, like the heart of a blue flower.

He is manifested incomparable among the beauty of the world.

The grace of love upon his body shines through his garments.

We see that the palms of his feet are redder than lac. We would say that his every step was crushing crimson cinnabar.

His feet are more coloured than the red fruit *vimba*, and the nails of his toes are ten moons lighting the ten directions of infinity.

The gold bells of the rings about his ankles chime with his yellow tunic; they recall the round blond flowers of the kadamba.

His members are soothed with incense, and the scent of musk goes forth from his body.

He wears a garland made of all the petals of the season, and a single flower of the kadamba shines in the midst of them.

Chandīdāsa

He is the reflection of the moon, wavering
in the river Yamunā.

One of those peacocks whose beauty satisfies
the soul has given plumes that his brow may
be exalted.

Curls shine like trembling light about his ears.
His lips may be compared with red flowers, his
teeth with seeds of pomegranate.

The lunar bow drawn on his forehead with a
paste of sandal is one with his gilded dresses.

The flowers of his eyes are underlined with a
curve of blue kohl, the curve of the shadow of
a cloud on the clear waters of Yamunā.

Two rows of pearl border his diadem. Its
jewels, circled with shining coral, are the nine
planets.

His hair is tressed with flower garlands, and is
as soft as white chamaras *.

He holds a bamboo flute in his hand, containing
a song of sorcery.

He is upright in three flexions. His right knee
is a little bended, and his head inclines toward
the left. His glance is lowered and does not
move. His smile has the sweetness of a nectar.

The women of the village are troubled. The
saints forget their sanctity. The people of
Brikvanupur are stricken with stupor, and the
King himself is rapt into a drunkenness.

So sings the poet Chandīdāsa.

Rādhā and Krishna

VI

NOW Rādhā and the pretty Kṛittikā look forth from the balcony of the palace window.

Rādhā watches the magic games of Subala and reason suddenly fails and abandons her. Her companions are thrown into astonishment and grief.

‘Surely in the whole world, or in the imagination of any man, has there never been such beauty.’

‘Whence comes it? Who brought such treasure here? How might our God compose such colouring?’

The heart of Rādhā is bowed by this apparition, for it is impregnate and radiant with the love of Krishna.

She falls into the gulf of this love, for her heart is simple.

Her eyes, watching in languor and half-closed, now suddenly open to receive this wave of love.

‘What would I not give to have him for my own? With what price may I purchase him for myself alone? In each of my incarnations I would sing praises of his charm.’

And, so saying, Rādhā is betrayed to Śrī-Krishna. She falls unconscious, as an inert gold doll might fall from the height of the sky.

Chandīdāsa

Thanks to the cunning of Krittikā, Rādhā's mother does not guess the cause of her daughter's illness. Nor do those about the princess pierce that mystery.

Lalitā cries in her astonishment :

‘Why has Rādhā suddenly fainted? A moment ago she watched the people passing. Why is she now unconscious? That is a mystery.’

And Krittikā also says : ‘Why does she stay thus stretched, with her eyes half-open, as stiff as a wooden toy?’

And Rādhā's mother laments with an unquiet heart, and weeps before them all :

‘What grief! Let a servant go swiftly to warn the King that Rādhā has been suddenly stricken with disease.’

So sings the Brahmin Chandīdāsa.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

VII

ONE of Rādhā's girls fetches a milkwife, who knows all sorcery, and leads her to the royal house.

The milkwife takes the pulse of the sick girl, and understands that it is no fever, but the influence of pestilent air or of an evil spirit.

Yet, though there is no fever, the heart beats fast.

'I can tell nothing,' she says, 'it is no sunstroke, nor is it feigning. O King of Brikvanu, I will sit in the middle of the room and try my incantations.'

Gesturing with her gold stick, the milkwife conjures, while the girl Ramā knots a careful amulet about the neck of the princess.

But there is no change, or the disease grows worse.

Magic words are uselessly pronounced in her ear. The sorceress lights a fire and burns there upon resin an arrow fashioned by the goddess who was her mother.

Subala continues his magic feats at the threshold of the palace. He sees the King passing and says :

'The King has gone into the room of the

Chandīdāsa

women. Why has he passed so rapidly, not stopping to render homage to my magic?’

One of the palace maids comes to him, saying : ' O magician, a woman of the royal house has fallen unconscious while she was watching you. Her name is Rādhā, and her unsayable beauty charms the world. Our King is by her.'

At these words all the young shepherds overflow in question: 'What is the matter with her? During which of the magic feats did the evil take her? This is the work of one of those spirits which take demoniac form at the close of day. She has been touched by him and terrified.'

‘A sorceress has come to care for her,’ says the servant. ‘She has taken her pulse, and fails to restrain the malady.’

‘I know all exorcism and every spell,’ answers Subala. ‘The princess is certainly under the influence of some evil genius.’

‘O magician,’ cries the girl, ‘if you can cure her you may receive fine robes and gifts and jewels, and as much gold and as much silver as a king could dream.’

‘I know many and sure ways of saving her,’ says the friend of Krishna.

Therefore the servant goes to the King and stands before him with hands joined in deep respect.

Rādhā and Krishna

‘Mahārāj,’ she says, ‘the sorcerer who does feats of magic by the threshold has declared he has knowledge of spells. He knows how to listen to sick hearts, and how to interpret the beating of the pulse. He says that the princess saw a demon while she was sitting near the window, and that the fright has sent her soul astray. Surely it cannot be otherwise. He bade me speak of him to the Mahārāj.’

These words send the King mad with happiness, and he cries : ‘Let him bring back my daughter to her own in any way he pleases. Call him. Let him come.’

The maid leads Subala to the women’s room. He approaches curiously.

He goes toward Rādhā and takes her pulse. He sets himself to conjure the evil spirit with invocation.

Subala leans nearer still and says the charm of all charm into the ear of Rādhā. He murmurs the name of that Krishna whom we know, who is the Master of Hearts, whose body is all beautiful, who lives and reigns in Gokula.

‘*Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, it is Krishna himself,*’ he whispers.

And these twenty sounds repeated in the ear of Rādhā renew the image of the god.

Chandīdāsa

Light was kindled within her, O Krishna, jewel of the world. O symbol of love, and centre of the life of Vraja. O loved of all the women of Gokula, O infinite power, protector of all life that lives, O Krishna. Your name vibrated in the ear of Rādhā, and she rose and her eyes were opened and her pain departed.

Subala regards her with stag-like glances, as she looks round.

The rays of her beauty blind the magician and fill his eyes with tears. He abases his lids, and cannot raise them.

‘What shall I give you?’ cries the King of Brikvanu to Subala. ‘What shall I give you now that you have brought back my daughter? Why cannot I let you into my heart and, when you are there, give you that heart itself?’

But Subala answers: ‘Hear me, O Mahārāj. I have done as one who knows how difficult it is to benefit others, and that to do ill to others is the greatest sin of the three worlds. Let the life of the evil-doer be pain. Let the man whose actions are as a friend’s before a friend be paid in this life and in all.’

So sings the Brahmin Chandīdāsa.

The King rewards Subala with gold and silver, and with embroidered robes. He entertains him at a great feast.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

VIII

‘**BUT** listen further, O King,’ said the five young shepherds, ‘for we also have a word to say to you. It may be that the shade of the demon dwells with your daughter still, for a spirit may persist in the body of his possession. Tell her to go down and bathe in the Yamunā, as an added precaution, so that the resentment of the demon may be laid. A bath in the waters of Yamunā has all the virtue of pilgrimage, and pilgrimage is cleansing to the bewitched.’ Rādhā was put in the charge of one of her companions, and the girl was bidden to lead her to Yamunā.

They walk, and the princess lights the world as she passes through it.

But the young shepherds hasten toward Vrindāvana, where Natavara stays, the pearl of cunning.

Subala tells his friend all that had passed, but his friend knows it, though he had not moved.

How beautiful is that corner of the bank of the Yamunā where the great banyan grows !

All birds are singing in trees of diverse essence, and the trees are flower heavy.

The perfumes of the wild date and the white chamelī and of the jasmine mingle with the

Chandīdāsa

scents of the dark blue parul tree and of the champaks.

The amaranth and the round gajakanda dance with the parrot-flowers, and the double ranks of the kadamba wave and shine. Among a hundred thousand plants, the climbing madhobi mingles her white and saffron with the acacia.

Swans and the charbak duck and the moon-partridge people those thickets.

The white cows with suave silk hair come down to pasture.

Hornets murmur there.

And there Krishna stands forth, revealing his guise of most seduction, such as a blue cloud descended to the foot of the madhobi tree.

His bowed diadem and his tender, lowered glances fan up the world to ecstasy.

The lunar disk painted upon his brow with paste of sandal follows the line of the peacock plumes.

The frail arrows of the peacock lengthen the line of the slim pearls hanging at each nostril.

He stands there in three flexions, and drunken bees rest in the garland of flowers about his neck.

He is dressed in a yellow robe, bells chime at his ankles, and his bamboo flute, whose sound

Rādhā and Krishna

is honey, plays on five notes a song that makes the world forgotten.

Rādhā goes down to the bath with her companion.

Subala says: 'Young, incomparable beauty stands on the river bank. All men of mortal stuff lose their assurance when they come by her shadow. Hasten down to the bank of the river.'

The King's daughter goes, with her walking as of a wild swan, down to the stream.

She walks in the middle of the way, and Krishna and Subala pass forward toward her.

Krishna knows her and is faint in the light of her beauty.

Their glances mingle, life checks in the blood of Krishna.

They feel they are bound together for ever ; it is only with trembling glances that they touch ; it is only with the emanation of their hearts they come together.

The girl of Brikvanu searches him from feet to crown, and secretly vows her soul into his service.

In her thought she begins to pluck the wild flowers of the season, and would lay them down before those feet.

She may not touch him, but she carries his image in her heart for ever.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

Subala murmured : ‘ I shall bring her to you, with the girls Lalitā and Bisakhā. I will pretend to lead them to adore the sun. You shall approach and touch her.’

And Chandīdāsa sings: ‘ Love will seem sweeter when they have gone through the heavy trials that wait for them. Lovers and ladies shall henceforth recognise in Krishna the symbol of all love, under our guidance they shall know his many adventures and most clever artifice ! ’

Rādhā and Krishna

IX

THE princess has gone to the Yamunā, she has seen Shāma and has returned to her own place.

She sits in a lonely corner and begins to weep, dreaming of the beauty of Krishna.

She leans her cheek upon her palm, in a saint's attitude. Waters, like those which pour from the clouds in the rain month, fall from her eyes.

Lalitā falls into sadness also. She takes Rādhā between her arms and, wiping her face with a fold of her sārī, questions her tenderly :

‘ Your face knew laughter and was ignorant of grief, why are you now so desolate and weeping? My soul is anxious; you have not arranged the clusters of your hair. Why are your thoughts so far from you? ’

Rādhā goes forth for no reason twenty times an hour, and then returns.

Her spirit is pierced, and she looks sideways at the kadamba thicket.

Why is Rāī so full of care? She has nothing to fear from her parents. Does a demon in truth possess her?

She has lost her rest. She takes no further care to order the folds of her garment. She sits

C h a n d ī d ā s a

down. She lets her robe slip so that it bares her shoulder.

Is she not a King's daughter? Is she not young? Is she not married in a great and honourable family? What further can she desire? Does she want the moon?

What then is this trouble of Rādhā?

She sits alone in a far corner, and does not hear what is said.

She dreams, looking upon the sky, and the lobe of her ear moves not.

She will not eat. She wears the red robe of a nun.

She has undone her hair. She looks fixedly upon the blue cloud, twining her hands together.

She looks fixedly upon the blue necks of peacocks.

Rādhā's grandmother says : ' Adored one, what does this wild air mean? You do not cease from weeping. You went to bathe in the Yamunā and saw the Breaker-of-Hearts by a kadamba thicket. You are thinking of him now. When you looked at him, you covered all your respectable family with shame. You are the wife of an excellent gentleman. You belong to his house. His house is honourable.'

Rādhā and Krishna

The memory of the yellow robe and strange colouring of Krishna come back to Rāī. She shivers and falls, and her companions have to hold her up.

Some of them murmur : ‘ Rāī is possessed by an evil spirit. Let us have her cured by sorcerers.’

Words of power are said over her. Exorcism is practised with her hair.

One of the girls says jestingly :

‘ Let them bring her the flower garland of Kalia. Rādhā will lose the evil influence, and all her grief.’

. . .

‘ Who was it said the name of Shāma so near to me ?

‘ There is great sweetness in that name. I say it over and over. He puts a spell upon me when I say his name.

‘ My friend, how can I have Shāma ?

‘ If his name has this power upon me, what condition would be mine at the touch of his body ?

‘ Now that I have seen him, what can I know of religion ? I wish to forget him, and I cannot. What must I do, and how can I find refreshment from my pain ?

. . .

C h a n d ī d ā s a

‘ Dear friend, great beauty appeared to me to-day. I went down to the Yamunā and saw a man of sombre colouring, marvellously adorned. Upon his bent head he wore a diadem, framing the flowers of his hair. Peacock feathers rayed forth like the wavering beams of the sun. A yellow sign was upon his brow, in the midst of a gracious moon outlined in sandal.

‘ The bees came and went about him, drawn by the perfume of his body.

‘ He stood at the foot of a tree, upright, in three flexions.

‘ The son of Nanda has stolen my heart. Why was it not some other woman? Why should it be I?

‘ I preserved the repute of my family from all stain. But why did his flute sing: Rādhā, Rādhā, Rādhā?

‘ He wore a garland of jasmine and champak. He danced, and in his airy leaping, crossed and uncrossed his feet.

‘ The inclination of his head was gracious. It would have drawn you unresisting

‘ His head showed like a shaken moon, and was covered with a fillet made of fresh red berries.

‘ He ceased to dance, he crossed his feet, and leaned his back on the kadamba tree. But

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

X

BARAI, the companion of Rādhā, seeks out Sṛī-Kṛṣṇa, saying :

‘ They tell me that you often talk with Rādhā. It is a good thing that I should have met you. You make advances to young wives when they come to the river. Those whom you have treated so have confided in me, coming from the Yamunā. What is the meaning of your conduct ?

‘ I will not be vexed with you if you behave differently. In the past you have not been virtuous. What is this desire that takes the wives of others ?

‘ I am the only one who has heard these stories. Think of your reputation, if they had come to other ears !

‘ You sigh with impatience, you fall upon the ground.

‘ I understand your fear ; but be assured that none can hear me.

‘ Do not begin again, or soil the family of Nanda.’

Sṛī-Kṛṣṇa answers : ‘ Why has God pressed all the sweetness of the world into the name of Rādhā ?

‘ I cannot hear it without fainting. Its two

C h a n d ī d ā s a

sounds have taken possession of my heart. I tremble and I have lost tranquillity. Deign to understand me, my dear friend, for I do not know my way.'

. . .

Barai returns to the sweet Rādhā, saying :
' Fine symbol of all love, listen to the words of Krishna.

' I found him in desolation, near to the grove where you saw him. I found him weeping. I found him weeping for you.

' He sighed and repeated : " Rāī," and fell upon the ground.

' He took me by the hands and asked me anxiously. He asked how he might have you.

' That is why I have come to you, O Rāī. Go to him and learn his love. Go to him and make that love grow greater. Who can prevent you ?

. . .

' I have come to you, darling, straight from seeing him. He seems to be near his end. He does not tend his hair, or eat or drink, and his ill is growing.'

Now Rādhā is luminous with happiness.

But Barai says : ' He dreams of the sweetness of your name, and he knows no one. His lids are fixed. His glances are wooden, like a doll's. I touched a wisp of cotton to his nostril to see

Rādbā and Kṛṣṇa

if he were breathing. Darling Rādhā, his life has not left him utterly. His breath a little remains to him. Go to him now.'

And Cāṇḍīdāsa the Brāhmin sings: 'Grief alone is the cause of his sickness, Rādbā alone the remedy.'

SRĪ-KRISHNA disguises himself as a snake-charmer. He goes from house to house, and comes at last to the palace of Brikvanu.

All the girls crowd round him, to watch the tricks of Indra, the snake-master.

He lifts the lid of a clay vase, and makes a snake come forth, lifting it by the neck.

He beats the reptile, and it grows furious. It stiffens and rises up and wavers, following the movement of the hand which Krishna spreads above it.

The young women are pleased with this, and question the performer as to his dwelling.

‘I live in the near wood, and am called Nāga-damana, Lord of the Serpents, a very famous name. I came to earn wherewithal to clothe myself. In pity give me what I need, not a torn waist-cloth, but a new and excellent one. Give me the sārī you wear, give it for love of me.’

‘You are a jester and not worth a penny; yet you would have us give you costly garments. If you were not a beggar, you might demand such things. But you live in the wood and catch snakes, you dress in a rag and loiter upon the river bank.’

‘It would give me pleasure to have one of

Rādhā and Krishna

your garments ; my heart would be filled with joy ; I would care for it as the fruit of my eye. Also I dream of touching one of your feet. May I ? ’

‘ Be quiet, snake-charmer, take what you are given and depart in dignity. ’

‘ I am not a thief. I earn my bread by begging, and fear no man. I was but jesting with you. Why do you not make a poor man happy ? ’

Again, on the day of the festival of Indra, when the young women have gone to adore the god in Gokula, and the city is full of noise, Krishna disguises himself as a merchant.

He sets out his trestle, laden with necklaces, among the other stalls, and cries to the women :

‘ I have many fine things. I have treasures of pearl and coral, with gems which I have laid up for you. ’

And when the girls come near his stall, he sighs insinuatingly : ‘ What can I show you ? Pearls in a necklace ? The prices are rather

At this the young women protest : ‘ Oh, we are not purchasers. It is pleasant to look upon such things. ’

One pretty child takes up a necklace and passes it about the throat of her friend, in order to try it. She approves, and is asking the price,

Chandīdāsa

when another girl greedily lays hold of a gilded needle and runs away without paying.

Krishna catches and holds her by the breasts. She struggles, and he reclaims his due and does not let her go. He kisses her on the face, crying : ' How dare you steal my needles ? '

Then all the women crowd round to plunder his stall. Pillage and disorder reign. Each merchant is busy protecting his own stock, without caring for that of his fellows.

Delightful is the song of Chandīdāsa, the friend of the washer-girls. All is sacked into confusion, the fair comes to an end, the comedy is finished.

Rādhā and Krishna

XII

KRISHNA disguises himself as a barber. He enters the palace of Brikvanu, even to the chamber of Rāī.

Krishna prepares his case of instruments, and gives Rāī a mirror, saying tenderly : ‘ Sit down, that I may care for your beauty.’

The desirable young woman sits down, while the strange barber fetches a small jar of water, which he pours into a gold cup.

He files the corners of Rādhā’s nails, and shapes them to moon-forms. Bemused and half asleep, in a pleasant idleness, Rāī lets her hand fall softly on the barber’s shoulder.

Shāma, as like to melt as a statue of butter, rubs the feet of the princess with burnt earth, and has delight while doing so.

Still tasting his secret joy, he paints the soles of her feet with his vermilion.

He fards them skilfully. Then, pressing them to his breast, he inscribes his name on them.

‘ Look, pretty one,’ he says, ‘ look at your feet, and see if I have cared for them well.’

Rāī sees the name of Shāma written in full upon the sole of her foot.

She forces an air of indifference, and asks the barber : ‘ Is that your name ? ’

‘ I go from village to village. I call myself

C h a n d ī d ā s a

Shāma, that I may draw down the benevolence of the people.'

Now that the barber has completed his work, Rādhā retires from his presence.

Being in joyous humour, the Prince of Love disguises himself as a flower-seller. He fashions garlands, hanging them on his arm, and cries along the street : ' Who desires flowers ? Who desires flowers ? '

He comes to the house of Brikvanu, and Rāī leads him to a deserted corner, where she begins to bargain for a garland.

But the feigned flower-seller answers : ' Let me first adorn you with one of them. You can pay afterwards.'

Krishna passes a garland about the neck of Rāī, and kisses her face.

Rādhā recognises Krishna and, surprised that he should so jest in her own dwelling, keeps the god's hand in hers with a certain pain.

She murmurs to him : ' I am not a stranger.'

Krishna disguises himself as a doctor. He goes about from one house to another in the city of Gokula, visiting and curing the sick.

He frees them from all ills. He causes the man with headache, the sufferer from love fever, and him who cannot sleep because his heart is

Rādhā and Krishna

burning, to drink of a certain water. Only Dhanantari, who is the god of doctors, knew that remedy. The God of gods was ignorant of it.

He says to the afflicted : ‘ Take this water and be cured. You may pay me later.’

Someone tells Rādhā of these cures, and Rādhā rejoices.

She insists on seeing what sort the doctor may be, and one of her companions runs to fetch him. Krishna rejoices.

He goes to the dwelling of Rāī, and, as he waits to be called in, feels need to travesty himself.

. . .

He paints over his colouring and covers his hair with mud. He puts on his garments inside out, and disguises his walking in a singular way.

He sets an elaborate bag upon his shoulder, filled with roots and plants.

He sits without shame at Rādhā’s bedhead and lifts the veils from her face. He looks at her, and says most anxiously : ‘ She is very ill.’

He takes her left * wrist and counts the beating of her pulse. ‘ The water of love is rotting her heart like a poison,’ he cries aloud.

In her delight she rises up, stretching out all her limbs, and saying : ‘ You have seen clearly.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

Now tell me what I must take to be strong again and cleared of my sickness.'

'I would be shy to give you my remedy,' answers the physician. 'If I had place and time, I could allay your fever. I could cure you utterly.'

At the double meaning of these words Rādhā knows that this is another reckless trick of Krishna's.

. . .

Krishna dresses himself as a priestess. He assumes an expression of beatitude, and walks slowly.

The rumour of his arrival spreads about the city of Gokula, and the people of Vraja come out to meet him. They bow down before the lotus of his feet. There are tears in their eyes.

. . .

'I have come to Vrindāvana,' lies the divine Shāma, 'but my dwelling is in Mathura. I will tell you the secret of my life.'

'I adore my goddess, and have come into these places of pilgrimage to implore the aid of those who believe in her also. I am a pious wanderer, whose soul is satisfied. I tell you the simple truth. I will stay for some time in your city of Vraja.'

The priestess departs from the crowd, clapping

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

her fingers against her cheeks according to the ritual. She asks her way to Bṛikvanupur. 'I must go to that place also,' says the cunning lover, for he is inspired by love.

It is thus that he comes to enter the palace of Rādhikā, disguised as a priestess.

He wears curls at his ears, and has painted signs upon his forehead with red sandal paste. He carries a basket of flowers in his left hand, his body is covered in ashes, and he tells a chaplet of brown and ruddy beads.

'Glory be to the goddess who protects Gokula ! Whom the city of Vraja adores ! O herdsmen and milkmaids, bow down to Bhāgavatī, for she is the wife of the supreme God, and she gives happiness.'

Rādhā's grandmother, hearing of this grace, comes to the priestess with many questions.

'The herdsman you speak of will do well. You will succeed in every undertaking. Your enemies shall be laid low. Your husband has only good intentions.'

Then Kulilā, the sister-in-law of Rādhā, enters with her mother, Jotilā, and both fall at the feet of the priestess, praying : 'O give us happiness for our daughter-in-law. O give us happiness for our sister-in-law.'

Chandīdāsa

But Shāma joyfully answers : ‘ She who desires my blessing must come to receive it.’

Jotilā fetches Rādhā and leads her by the hand. Rādhā sits down by the saint and unveils her face.

The priestess has only fortunate things to say to her :

‘ She carries the signs of happiness. The music of Gandharva, who sings in heaven, is purified by her beauty. She is the protector of the world, her name is Rādhā, and she is the King’s daughter of Brikvanu.’

The priestess takes Rādhā by the hand and looks upon her face. Joy becomes all her portion.

She opens her basket and, taking a flower, sets it in the hair of Rādhā. ‘ You shall live with joy about you. You shall have your desire,’ she murmurs. ‘ No shame shall come upon your house.’

But Rādhā answers gently : ‘ I cannot believe you unless you can cure the pain which is about my heart.’

‘ You have made a condition which I fear to fulfil. Have you not given your heart ? ’ questions the priestess.

Rādhā lets her smiling glance linger about Krishna, and asks : ‘ Where do you dwell, O priestess ? ’

Rādhā and Krishna

‘I dwell in this city. I can say no more than that.’

Rādhā looks more closely upon the priestess, and retires to her own chamber in confusion.

The faithful lover disguises himself for the last time. He visits the houses of Brikvanu as a necromancer.

He goes from door to door with an almanack in his hand, until he comes to the dwelling of the lovely Rādhā.

The girl Bisahka asks him of his life, and Krishna answers discreetly: ‘I dwell in Hastinagara *, but I voyage through strange lands to gain my living. I stand ready, with contented mind, for those who would question me about the year.’

‘O Rādhā,’ says the poet Chandīdāsa, ‘this necromancer can make the most cunning calculations. He will answer all your questions. Embrace his knees, and you shall know the answer of a most strange science.’

Chandīdāsa

XIII

ON the path to the Yamunā, at the foot of the kadamba tree, the young, dark god stands upright in three flexions, wearing a gilded dress, holding his flute.

He stands on the path by which the daughter of the herd must pass.

‘If you must go to the ghat, take another way,’ he sings. ‘If you do not wish sorrow, O Rādhā, take another way.’

‘But I always go by this path,’ says Rādhā, ‘and who shall prevent me to-day?’

Thus the two lovers speak, and Rādhā struggles to pass, and Krishna opposes her. They push against each other.

And Chandīdāsa sings: ‘Dark-coloured lord, we feel ashamed of you.’

Rādhā and Krishna

XIV

Complaints to the Moon

‘O moon of the sky,’ says Rādhā, ‘O moon more yellow than sandal-wood, would I not break you in a hundred pieces with a mallet of iron, if I could reach you !

‘Oh, that I might learn the charms of the Tantra, the magic of Rahu, then would I order your destruction, moon.

‘I would not have you driven from the sky, but I would veil you to make an end of your great pride.

‘I would adore Indra, that I might then demand this work from him ; I would compel you to stay covered up with complete clouds.

‘Ah, let the time of the new moon, when nights are dark, return and stay for ever.

‘Let a fog cover you over, as when Parasara was joined to Matsagandha.’

‘This is because the moon shone curiously upon the loves of Rādhā and Krishna,’ sings Chandīdāsa.

Chandīdāsa

XV

Answers of the Moon

‘ RĀDHIKĀ, my friend, O like a champak petal, listen. Which of us two shines the more brightly ?

‘ How many millions are bright in you ? One of your radiant feet could spurn a hundred moons.

‘ Your teeth are whiter than my body.

‘ It was from fear of your beauty that I chose the sky to shine in.

‘ What brightness could pass your limbs’ brightness ?

‘ If I tried to equal you God would resolve me into sixteen crescents.

‘ The sun trembles before the drop of vermilion twinkling on your brow ; even he trembles before the beauty of your lips.

‘ It is only the sun’s great audacity which allows him to return so quickly within the range of your glances. I who am more timid must keep away from you for fifteen days.

‘ Your two eyes gladden like the eyes of a bird.

‘ Your nose is a flower of sesame ; Madana is troubled to see your face.

‘ What further comparison may I use of you ?

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

‘ The form of your ear recalls the vulture *.

‘ How paradisal are your eyes with their eye-brows !

‘ I have never seen a rival beauty.’

And Chandīdāsa the singer has no hope of seeing a rival beauty either.

Chandīdāsa

XVI

The Words of Rādhā to her Friend

' CARRY my thoughts to my well-belovèd.

‘Tell him that the sky and the evil moon are
against me.

‘She came forth in all her brightness while I was speaking to my husband’s parents ; I passed the rest of the night in converse with my husband.

‘If the moon has pity, to-night I shall try to join my well-belovèd.

‘If not, I shall wait for the moment of the new moon, when the star seems dead.

‘Tell him that I have not the time to go to him ; the work of the house is endless.

‘My mother-in-law calls me at every moment, my sister-in-law is watching me, and the moon’s vigilance is greater still. She had already risen when I tried to go to the wood.

‘My mother-in-law is furious with me. What can I do against a family that fears dishonour? Half of my nights are passed in seeking opportunity.’

*'Rādhā, Rādhā, you shall soon join Krishna again,'
sings Chandidāsa the poet.*

Rādhā and Krishna

XVII

After the Night passed in the Thicket

THE sparrow, the crow and the blackbird are singing.

The night is over, and Rādhā and Krishna have passed it waking.

Now he orders his hair and gets ready to go from her.

But she stays indolent, her head lying on her wild pillow, her eyes half-closed; they are veiled with a joyful lassitude.

She rises at last, but sees that they have mistaken their garments.

‘What shall I do? My mother-in-law and my sister-in-law are foes; they will hasten to heap words upon me. If they guess the thing they will become furious. There is great danger in this morning.’

‘Love is perfidious, O my Lover.

‘I love you and I languish. How can I cure this ill of loving Krishna?’

‘The night is passed. Return swiftly to your own place, my Love.

‘My mother-in-law and my sister-in-law are

Chandīdāsa

waiting. Eat a little betel quickly. Carefully tie the undone tresses of your hair.

‘Your face is pale, and makes me sad.’

Smiling, he wipes the moon of his face ; he takes up the magic of his darling flute, which he had set down near Rādhā.

He gathers up his gilded robe, casting a long, smiling, equivocal glance at Rādhā.

Shāma has gone, and Rādhā’s heart is most sorrowful. For what may not happen to him ?

What can we do for her ?

So sings the poet Chandīdāsa.

Rādhā and Krishna

XVIII

IT is dawn, and the folk of Rādhā's house are waking.

After she has fulfilled her domestic tasks, she wanders restlessly, seeking to be elsewhere.

She enters her room and finds the dark scarf of Krishna, and the garland of atasi flowers which have fallen from his crown.

Rādhā, seeing them, gives up her heart to sadness; she wipes away the kohl from round her tear-wet eyes.

She looks out toward the path where Shāma plays on his flute. She neglects her household duty.

Sometimes she feels gay, and then is caught in a swift sadness.

She says words other than those she means to say.

She remembers that this is the hour when the herds lead their cows down into the field. She dreams that it would be wise to watch for Krishna and to warn him that he has forgotten his garland.

She hears the herds passing, with the noise as of a rolling river. Rādhā shows her face at the window, and Krishna appears to her. His brow is girt with a new gilded garland.

Chandīdāsa

He comes by the high-road with his herd of
cows.

Balarāma, Chidana, Sudama are there about him, and he leans on Subala's shoulder.

He laughs and makes his flute sing the syllables of Rādhā. Subala alone may recognise them.

The young herds go to the wood by the high-road, crying Hai ! Hai ! to hasten their cows along.

And Rādhā, who is the image of love, looks upon the beauty of the young, dark god from her window. Their glances meet, and their souls hasten along their glances, and come together.

Yet, at the sight of so ensnaring a face, Rādhā is tormented and cries :

‘How can they send so rare a treasury to the wood?’

‘What shall I say in defence of his mother, O my friend? She can have no shadow of feeling in her. Her heart is drained of pity. She lacks compassion to send a young flower to the forest, a youth of the carnation tint of Krishna.

‘How can he go so far with such a delicate body? How can he herd the cows? The heat is callous, and the sun burns his face. Hundreds of snakes glide under the grasses of the wood, and the reed splinters will pierce his red feet.



NEWAR SALAR JUNG BAHADUR.

Chandīdāsa

answered. This soundless language is only understood by Rādhā and Krishna and by Subala.

Now Subala drives the herd to the wood with Chidana and Sudama and Balarāma. But Krishna goes down toward Mathura.

The young and amorous god sits between two kadamba hedges. He puts on a garment of new appearance and plays his flute.

He is dressed as a dancer. He sits by the road as if to implore charity. He looks along the road and plays his sounding flute.

The moon-faced milkmaid thinks of the sign which Krishna's eyes have made her.

She calls Barai, she calls the milkmaids about her, saying : ' Let us set our baskets in order. Let us sell our milk at Mathura. Let us not delay.'

The milkmaids return to their houses and take up their baskets of butter, their gold jars of cream and milk. They cover them with costly tissues.

They put on their ornaments, and the moon grows pale.

Dressed in their coloured tunics, they set their baskets and gold jars upon their heads, and cluster again round Rādhā.

So sings the poet Chandīdāsa.

Rādhā and Krishna

The milkmaids go towards Mathura, to sell their butter and cream.

And as they go they meet Srī-Krishna, and take him, as is his will, to be a toll-gatherer. He feigns to demand payment in cowries before he will let them pass.

But Barai knows him and, with Rādhā, gives skilful counsel, so that the two lovers are left together.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

XIX

LO! a matter of magic to see, comparable only with a cloud not dreamed of.

Is that a group of thick mists, fallen among the flowers?

A moon shows near it; the milkmaids seem adorned by its mystical shining. Is it a moon? Is it a fruit? But how could a fruit grow upon a cloud?

The branches, bearing these fragmentary moons, seem to be playing together. Yet there is no grumbling of thunder, but from this magic knotting there rises a flute's song, and attentive peacocks hover about it.

It is Rādhā and Krishna, rounded by a halo of light and seated upon the thousand heads of a dancing serpent.

Who can understand the beauty and the mystery and the artifice of such a love?

The lark, snared by the shining of this universal cloud, flies drunkenly, hoping to reach it. The milkmaids are painted with light because of it.

• • •
'Barai, O Barai, a day is shining for me,'
Rādhā says.

'I am made one with my master. All my strivings have been to him for whom I suffered.

. *Rādhā and Krishna*

The desire of my heart is satisfied, receiving Yadumuni.

‘Go now to Ayana, to my husband, and tell him that Rādhā is dedicate to Shāma.

‘Tell him that Rādhā has consecrated her soul to the red feet of Krishna.

‘What need have I to dwell any more with Ayana, or to be religious, or to be penitent ?

‘Let come what will to the fair renown of my house. Let the lightning break it, O Barai, for I know happiness.’

‘Never have I heard such exposition of happiness and love,’ says Chandīdāsa.

Chandīdāsa

XX

Rāī as a Herdsman

‘MY love has gone to the wood,’ said Rāī.
‘And I wish to plait my hair and set it up upon my head, I wish to disguise myself as a herdsman. Then I shall go in my joy to the place where the lotus eyes of Krishna are. I will go to the wood to meet Shāma ; he is the colour of a blue cloud. Plait your hair, my friends, set it up on your heads, and dress in yellow garments.’

Joyously the milkmaids dress themselves as herdsmen, and when they are ready, lo ! a myriad of cows come up from the Lower World and surge about them.

Whole lowing herds appear, and the world marvels.

Indra arrives on his elephant to see so rare a sight.

And Brahmā comes on his swan. Shiva applauds from the back of his bull, crying : ‘Excellent ! excellent !’ He claps his hands, dancing the dance of joy and making his cheeks resound beneath his fingers.

These novel herdsman call their cows, Dhavalī they call, and Sangli. They leap in their pleasure, they go down to Yamunā.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

They come to a nook of the woods, and Shāma looks out at them.

‘From what village? And in what village? Why do you advance so joyously to my green retreat? What are your fathers’ and your mothers’ names?’

He speaks with a smile, but his spirit is in a snare of curiosity.

Now the perfume of Rādhā’s body intoxicates him. He looks long at her feet and her head.

‘O Shāma,’ asks Lalitā, ‘O our treasure, do you not know Rādhā? What sort of lover are you then?’

‘O Rādhā,’ sings Chandīdāsa, ‘Now look upon the beauty of your lover and be content.’

Chandīdāsa

XXI

Confidences held by Rādhā with One of her Companions

‘ THIS morning I slept by my sister-in-law. I shamelessly tell you all I felt, my friend. In the torpor of my sleep I dreamed that my lover embraced me.

‘ My sister-in-law woke in fury, saying : “ You think you are with your lover ! Alas, what wantonness ! Oh, that a woman of a good house should do so with another’s husband ! I have had proof of what was hinted to me. I will tell my brother when he returns.”

‘ You may understand how my heart trembled at these cruel words, how my heart died down for shame.

‘ I looked away and pretended not to hear her, but she continued to scold me. I rubbed one of my eyes with my hand ; I looked out of the other.’

‘ Why are you afraid, Rādhā, when you have the love of Kṛṣṇa ? ’ says Chandīdāsa.

Rādhā and Krishna

XXII

Farewell

‘Now is the moment of separation,’ Rādhā says. ‘He keeps on saying the three words: I must go. How many kisses did he give me? How many times did he bind me with his arms? He took my hand in his; he made me swear by him. He tried to persuade me to promise another meeting. He walked a few paces, and then turned and looked back anxiously.’

‘His love is so deep, Rādhā, his prayers are so warm,’ says Chandīdāsa. ‘Oh hold him in your heart for ever!’

Cḥāṇḍīdāsa

XXIII

The Bed of Flowers

THE milkmaids make a green couch and deck it with the three kinds of jasmine.

They make so fair a bed of flowers that yogis swoon to see it. Madana, who knows every marvel, is humbled by it.

Columns of flowers, walls of flowers, chambers of flowers, pillows of flowers wooing to idleness ! Arrows of flowers upon either hand !

The parakeet and the red-billed cuckoo guard the threshold ; Madana is sentinel. Hornets boom there, and the soft breeze whispers there, and the six seasons shake with Spring in the breast of that green cradle.

The night is lighted with lamps of precious stones.

They prepare perfumed water, anise and betel.

Rādhā looks at the green bed, she lies down on the green bed and waits.

But Krishna does not come, and Rādhā weeps.

She says : ‘ I made this bed for my lover. I tressed flowers for him. I prepared betel, and lit lamps so that the grove is shining. I have seen that there is no lack. Why does Kanu

Rādhā and Krishna

not come to me, who is the prince of love, the bird of wisdom ?

‘ I was able to steal away to this deep wood. I beguiled my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law. Feeling my beauty and my youth in their ascendant, I had a great desire to meet my lover. How long shall I watch the path in vain ? How shall I soothe me ? ’

‘ The Prince of Love will come soon, Rādhā,’ says Chandidāsa.

Krishna was kept on his way to Rādhā by Chandra Bali, her jealous cousin. She forced him to spend the night with her. Krishna was in despair, but next morning he found Rādhā on her bed of flowers.

End of Part One

PART
II
RĀSALĪLĀ

X X I V

THERE IS A JEWELLED THRONE IN A DELICATE thicket on the bank of the Yamunā.

Trees of every essence blow about it, their branches bending to the earth beneath a weight of flowers, and birds sing in them.

The bees steal the honies which drip from the trees there ; the peacock and the peahen round out their tails there.

Creatures of the water, small glittering fishes, swim in the Yamunā, and the ripe lotuses hold up their nectar to the flies.

Every delight of nature decks that lonely wood, and Śrī-Krishna sits unseen there.

It is the full moon of the dry time Sarat, the time of Rāsalilā *.

The full moon seems to be about to overflow, nay, seems too pure.

Kanu, the king of dancers, sits with his flute to his lip in a dell where the hornets murmur and the birds are singing, where the peacock and the peahen utter their harsh cries, and the water-bird dahuki clamours out his joy.

It is for the love feast of Rāsalilā that Krishna, the son of Nanda, the passionate, the overflowing, loses himself in dreams.

He loosens a few notes from his bamboo flute.

Rādhā and Krishna

Touching his face, it makes even that more beautiful. Then upon the five holes of it he sings five messages.

The flute calls: *Rādhā, Rādhā, my well-belovèd.*

And the milkmaids, hearing, dream of the forest.

The sound of the flute destroys their peace, even the peace of those who know not love torment. They seem mad. As the stags of the wood struck by the hunter's arrow, they flee at haphazard, with wild glances.

And Rādhā says: 'It is his flute of spells. It is Krishna of the lotus eyes. He calls us. I cannot be calm. My heart is troubled. Do you not feel that only our body remains here, that our soul is down in the forest, is by our Krishna?

'The amorous moon wakes the desire of the moon-partridge, and he dreams of touching her. You know his rapture of joy when he flies into her light.

'Tell me when we can meet Nagar. Tell me when we can find his arms again?

'What can those who live with us and rule us now do to us? What matters ill report? We are going to Shāma.

Chandīdāsa

‘ He without whom we cannot live, without whom the winking of an eye seems twelve years long, calls us upon his flute. Let us run swiftly to him ! ’

And another milkmaid says : ‘ We cannot stay. We must go down to the wood of Vrindāvana.

One girl leaves her house-work and runs toward the forest, without even changing her garment.

Another madly mixes a jar of water with the milk she is boiling, and then abandons it.

A third, hearing the flute as she is making a meal, leaves her vegetables and peas and spices on the fire, and hastens away.

One milkmaid who is giving the breast to her baby, lays him on the ground and makes off with troubled heart. She runs to this notorious Vrindāvana, while the suckling weeps. She has lost all sense of right and wrong for Krishna.

Another, sleeping beside her husband, wakes suddenly to the sound of the flute. She wipes her face and puts on her finest robe. Leaving her husband and the clasping of his arms behind her, she hurries to the wood.

A sixth fails to finish her house task, for love has blinded her to duty.

Rādhā and Kṛishṇa

And, at the sound of that flute, one who is living in loss finds joy again.

But the milkmaid's husband wakes and pursues and catches her, saying: 'The night is far spent, whither are you going? Are you not ashamed? Do you not fear the gauntlet of the world's opinion? Your behaviour is very strange. Whither are you going at such an hour? A little more and you will be driven out from your family, a little more and you will be covered with shame and make me die of grieving. Why did you leave me? Whither are you going? Alas! alas!'

The lotus-eyed milkmaid remains calm beneath these reproaches; but as soon as her husband has once more gone to sleep, she flees again.

She flees under the spur of love and can obey it only. She flees without fear to the wood where Kanu is.

All the tormented women dress in haste, hearing desire only.

One of them hangs her anklets about her neck, another girds her thighs with necklaces, and forces bracelets on her breasts.

A third hooks on one earring, a fourth decks one arm only. One paints a small vermilion

C h a n d ī d ā s a

disk upon her brow, and then smears kohl beneath a single eye.

One girl puts on her skirt hindpart before, and cannot run. The women of Vraja are filled with an impatience.

But have we seen a beauty parallel in all the world to Rādhā ?

Dressed in an ensnaring robe and with jewels, she hides among the women of Vraja, lest she should be prevented.

Her friends go down with her swiftly toward Vrindāvana.

Rāī walks with great grace, and says in her madness :

‘ Night of incomparable joy ! God is to give me stored-up happiness. I shall adore his two feet, and bathe my body in the well of joy. I shall know my hope and see desire granted.’

And alone in his green bower, Yadunātha still sings the name of Rādhā upon his flute.

They come to Vrindāvana, but the malicious Kanu cries : ‘ O milkmaids, it is deep night. Why do you break the laws of nature ? The names of young women are tainted, should they approach me.’

‘ O Yadunātha,’ Rādhā answers tenderly, ‘ what do I care for my name ? I have sacrificed my

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

caste and my name before your feet. Why do you still speak of them? I am vowed entirely to your love. Why, then, on such a night do you recall those cares to me? You are the kohl of my eyelids, and the god of my heart. Why do you hold yourself thus with me; why have you strange thoughts? How can the well of the life of Vraja do so mischievously?'

‘ O love with lotus eyes, I have left my body
at home, I bring you my spirit.

‘I have abandoned all to come to the protection of your feet. O flute-player, do not repulse me. That would be wicked of you.

‘My soul loses its rest when I am not watching your face.’

'Grief has me by the throat when I cannot see you. I am in a room at night where the lamp has gone out.

‘You are as the fruit of our eyes to all of us. We believe that you deck the world. Your name is The-Granting-of-Desire.

‘ You are amorous, O Krishna, and know all things. How then shall I teach you ?

‘O prince, you may tell me all your wishes. The people of my house have become strangers to me, and you, a stranger, have become mine.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

‘ The fire in my heart brightens. To what other may I tell my sufferings, when it is great pain to tell them even to myself? Ah, turn the cruel side of your heart away from me !

‘ My sister-in-law has spread her net of evil words, calling me a Vile-Mistress-of-Shāma. But I carry the shame which has come upon me for your sake as if it were a chain of gold.

‘ The dangerous reproaches of the world have come upon me, and now I have to bear your harshness also.

‘ You gave me your love the first time that you saw me. Do you steal souls, but for the pleasure of laughing afterwards ?

‘ I have abandoned my husband for love of you ; we cannot dwell before you, thus mad for you.

. . .

‘ All the words that you have ever said to me since that first day are now arrows to me.

‘ You made me vows. Is there any one as unhappy? For only such could receive my suffering.

‘ If we, as women, had behaved so, we should have died of broken vows.

‘ But it is allowed, because you are a man.

‘ O Krishna, I address a prayer to you. What need had you to come and throw yourself at my feet that day ?

Rādhā and Krishna

‘I trusted in you, as I would have trusted a friend.

‘O son of Nanda, what occasion had you to lie to me? I will say over your words. Rise then and listen.

‘Turn to me for the last time in my life. Look at me yet once more before I go.’

The Prince of Love wept in his trouble at Rādhā’s words; but his teasing had offended his mistress.

. . .

Her heart suffers, and her face betrays her. The dark lotuses of her eyes grow red with tears.

Leaving her friends, she goes and sits apart at the foot of a madhobi tree, and stays there in prostrate silence.

The moon of her face is pale. She scrapes the earth with her left foot nervously. The pearl ornaments at her nostrils waver in the wind of her sighs.

A great fire of despair burns up the heart of Rāī, and when one of her companions comes to give her counsel, and to ask the cause of her grieving, and to beg her to return to Shāma, she is obstinate in silence.

. . .

The Prince of Love is sad in his green bower. •

Chandīdāsa

He is, indeed, as sad. He knows that Rādhā loves him, and is not gay.

He takes his flute and draws a joyous song from it, though his heart is tortured.

On his honey-tender flute he calls *Rādhā*, *Rādhā*, and weaves a rapid melody upon the breezes, picturing love.

So sweet is the song of Krishna that the beast and the bird of the wood rejoice, and the sylvan stags, falling beneath that spell, come together at the foot of the little hills. Krishna is trying to put an end to Rādhā's anger with his flute.

. . .

The messenger flute sings a love secret in its godlike rhythm, but the princess does not answer from her solitude.

Nagar forgets his happinesses ; the terror of grown absence is in his soul. He can do nothing save look upon the path which leads to Rādhā.

He sighs often in every moment, and can but repeat in his sorrow the name of Rādhā.

He does not know that his crown of peacock feathers, that his robe and his gilded waist-cloth have fallen from him. He does not know where his necklace of gems, his hair jewel, and his crown of fresh red berries have fallen from him ; he does not know

Rādhā and Krishna

where his honied flute and heavy little drums have fallen.

Courses of tears are flowing from his eyes.

And Chandīdāsa himself is sad to see these things.

Reduced by his pain, the Prince of Love chews not his betel.

‘Ah,’ he says, ‘I would forget all things. I would cease to be teasing if I could please and satisfy her.’

He orders a girl to go as messenger to Rādhā, saying: ‘I would know how to console her, if one would bring her to me. I have already sung upon my flute, praying her to return.’

‘O Prince,’ answers a certain one of the milkmaids, ‘I will go now to console Rādhā, and bring her back with me.’

She sought Rādhā in all diligence, and Rādhā, when she saw her, bent down her head. But the girl threw passionate arms about her, saying:

‘We cannot understand this novelty of yours, darling. You leave Nagar to whom you are consecrate. You abandon this incomparable lover, who seeks you anxiously.

‘Are you happy now that you have left him? You used to tress your hair so many times a day for him. Do you not remember how you

Chandīdāsa

put on a black scarf over your hair to do him
pleasure?

‘Why should you delay to go to him? Make trial of kindness. Seek the Prince of Love. Why are you angry, beautiful Rādhā? What sudden admirable strength has come in you that you are able to abandon Shāma?’

‘Hear his extremity, and how he appeared before me. He picked up the lotuses which had fallen from their place of adornment in his hair, he lifted them with his left hand. He held them in the hollow of his palm and, weeping, looked upon them.

‘I beheld him thus. Would you yourself see? He meditated upon you. That is why I am trying to bring you back to him.’

‘Forget your anger and run now to him. He is saying over your name. He tenderly grasps his left index of prayer with his right hand.

‘ Beautiful, look upon me. Lift up your moon face and listen while I speak of Kanu. He has watched all night for you and his torment is not as our torment.

‘ O Rādhā, if you would put Shāma’s collar of flowers about your neck, his incomparable garland of betel leaves about your neck, you would find resentment dying.

Rādhā and Krishna

‘Lift up your face to me but once. Ah, if you cease to look upon Krishna, he dies of grieving.

‘He sits alone in his green arbour. O you who are beautiful and the symbol of tenderness, how can you do so? Have you considered your anger? Can you abandon love?

‘You are not cruel, O fair Rādhā. Lift up your head. Why should you lose this lover? Why should you not continue to live your love?

‘I have never seen a young woman so strong and obstinate.

‘Nagar, a well of virtue, is failing now in sadness through your fault.

‘Go to his lotus eyes, go to the fairest of all men!’

. . .

The moon-faced Rādhā says no word. She is sadder still, and stays with her head bent forward.

Her ill-considered enmity grows a hundred times, and burns the centre of her heart.

She sighs, and her agony is to be read upon her eyes. She seems to be thinking, and answers nothing.

She scrapes the earth with her foot, sitting below the madhobi tree. Then she looks sideways at the messenger, saying at length :

C h a n d ī d ā s a

‘ O messenger, do not speak to me more of Kalia, for those syllables augment my grief.

‘ I will not go to see this Krishna. When you speak of him, the fire of sorrow grows bright in my heart again.

‘ Why should I go to him ? Leave me, for I have understood his soul. I would stay here, in the lunar shade of the madhobi.

‘ I left all things for him. I stained my family renown, and took nothing in exchange for that. Dishonour alone remained to me, when all was over.

‘ What kind of lover is this ? He gave me happiness ; but it is faint to-day. He drank at the stream of my love, for the sake of his heart’s thirst.

‘ My neighbours mock me when they hear the tale of my loves. But none can understand my grief.

‘ I have put an end to my love for Kanu. Speak no more of Kanu to me. Nothing is as bitter as the poison poured by Kanu.

‘ Go to him now, my friend, for I shall not do so.’

Thus Rādhā sends away the messenger, and stays at the foot of the madhobi, her face resting upon her palm.

She sighs and speaks to no one.

Rādhā and Krishna

A single girl stands by her silently.

A cuckoo comes to the branches of the madhobi, and makes his double cry.

Rādhā sees him, and the dark of his feathers reminds her of Krishna. She claps her hands to drive the bird away, crying :

‘ Why do you come to sing near me ? I drive you away. Fly rather to Shāma, fly to his thicket of voluptuous flowers. Your song seems to mean love and thus increases pain. Leave these branches.’

The cuckoo flies away, still letting fall his double cry.

• • •
But a peacock and his peahen comes to dance at the foot of the madhobi tree.

And Rādhā falls into a rage again, crying : ‘ Why do you come to dance with such drunkenness at the foot of my tree ? Go rather to where the Prince of Love dwells in his thicket. What happiness can you find in dancing near such pain ? You might have pleased me if your feathers held not the blue colouring of Krishna. A fire is lighted against my heart by the tint of your jewels. Go to the dark body of the Prince of Love.’

Then moon-faced Rādhā violently claps her hands, and the birds depart.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

But the flower scents call a thousand hornets about the madhobi, eager to drain its honey.

And golden Rādhā says to them :

‘ Why were you born with bodies as dark as Shāma ? What is your business, why do you buzz here ? Is it to bring my grief to birth again, to relight the fire ?

‘ The sight of you is wedded in my soul with the garlands of Syāma, upon which it pleases you to feed. Gorged with honey and fulfilled with love, you cling to the branches. And am I not troubled enough already ?

‘ I have need to be alone. You increase my grieving. Why do you come to trouble me ? ’

The hornets fly away, and Rādhā snatches the blue and black fillet from her hair, leaving no morsel.

She throws away the blue scarf from about her breasts ; she casts her black garment, and takes a robe and scarf of white.*

She wipes the kohl from her eyes, and renounces all dark ornaments.

One says : ‘ O moon-faced Rāī, why do you not put an end to your anger before it kills you ? Pretty one, why are you troubled ? Ah, cease to tremble when you speak. Although your face is bitter, why should you spurn all ornament ? O symbol of love, you are very

Rādhā and Krishna

beautiful; you ought to end this most exaggerated battle.'

But Rādhā answers, with a sidelong glance :
'Dark colours weigh upon my heart.'

The messenger has returned again to Krishna, and he cries :

'You who have tried to bring back Rādhā, tell me your news !'

'Rādhā is furious, O my Krishna,' the girl answers, 'but perhaps her rage would abate if yourself went to her. Alas, it is not my fault if I have failed.'

Then Kanu of the lotus eyes began to disguise himself, so that he might seek out Rādhā. He put on a robe of seduction, and tressed his hair with garlands of malati and chains of pearl. He put on a blue sārī and a gracious scarf, with ornaments of gold and heavy bracelets. He took a seven-stringed vīṇā * in his hand.

Thus changed and adorned, and with a single girl companion, the guileful Krishna goes to the madhobi tree.

Rādhā sees the beautiful woman afar off, and cries : 'Why have you come ?'

'Most beautiful, I come from a green bower where all the women of Vraja are about the Prince of Love.'

Chandīdāsa

‘ They called me to them because I was poor, and there I sang such rāgas * as I know. And those are Gaurī, Nata, Kedāra, Sindha, Bhairavi, Dako, Sahāna, Kānadā, Madhumādhari, Vilāval, Mālgava, Hamira, Dīpaka, Belabeli, Surat, and Māllarī.

‘And while I sang these rāgas, Nagar was troubled. He wished to hear others.

‘I sang again, and the conjoined names of Rādhā and Krishna trembled upon my strings.

‘ But Nagar felt no further joy after the music of these names. He begged me not to depart, saying : “ Stay, that your songs may murmur in my ear, singing not two but one name, singing the essence of all names, singing the tender sounds of the name of Rādhā.”

‘The name of Rādhā was a tender delight to him. How can I bear witness to that love of Kanu? “Sing Rādhā,” he said, “for I wish no other music.”

‘I sang Rādhā, and my vīnā sang Rādhā also. He told me how his heart strangled beneath my singing, and with what infinite love it answered.

‘ My vina sang, and Krishna lay beneath the charm of it. He seemed to know no other name but the name of Rādhā. Tears washed the

Rādhā and Krishna

lotus of his eyes more tender still ; he would not hear another music.

‘ Stilled with emotion, he yet grew frenzied, full of strange happiness. He stretched out his garland of pearls to me. See, most beautiful, here is his garland of pearls upon my breast.

‘ The Prince of Love, the Ocean of Wisdom, loses existence in the name of Rādhā.

‘ Why did my song please him so ? And why so trouble him ? Of what was he dreaming ? Alas, I do not know.

‘ He is alone in the thicket with his flute. I came to the madhobi, hoping that I might sing you certain ragas.

. . .

‘ Ah, listen also to the song of love.

‘ Lift up your head, my tender friend, for I shall sing you that rāga-which-is-inspiration.’

‘ Then sing, pretty musician,’ says the moon-faced Rādhā, ‘ for I wish to hear some music.’

So Syāma began to play the rāga Kedāra, with amorous melodies joining the names of Rādhā and Krishna.

The four sounds thrilled upon the strings of the vīṇā ; but the woman sang :

‘ Why, oh, why did you leave him ? What happiness can you know in staying thus so far ? ’

Rādhā grew pale, and then her moon-coloured

Chandīdāsa

cheeks betrayed their fire. Her anger lost its sustenance, and she felt weary. She began to take off her heavy jewels.

But the seven-stringed vīṇā said :

‘ Why have your words lost all their tenderness ? Why are you desolate ?

‘ The Prince of Love is by the madhobi tree. His face betrays his anguish.’

• • •
Rādhā says : ‘ Your vīṇā trembles with sweetness, sing again. It brings me happiness to listen. Surely none could help his grief departing under such music.

‘ Where do you live and how did you come here, and what is your name, O you whose words are sweet ? ’

‘ I live in Gokula, a milkmaid, and am called Syāma. That is indeed true, I am called Syāma.

‘ But sometimes also they call me the Singer, to give me pleasure. Kanu, the son of Nanda, called to me and I came.’

• • •
‘ O do not speak of Kanu. Talk of some other thing, or play upon your vīṇā, for nothing is better than music.’

She clasped her vīṇā in the fold of her breast and began to sing : ‘ Rādhā, Rādhā.’

Rādhā and Krishna

How tenderly those sounds swelled forth no man may say.

The glances of Rādhā and the player mingled,
joy flowed from each to each.

‘Gilded Syāma, sing Rādhā-Kanu, the-melody-that-brings-all-joy-to-birth.’

She plucked off her garlands of pearl and held them out to the musician, saying :

‘Take them, for you have sung most tenderly. Then come to me, come to me, that I may speak of my heart.’

She caught Syāma against her breast, and was filled with a strange delight. The perfumed sweetness exhaling at this touch from the body of Syāma, and her loving laughter and her side-long glances, betrayed her Lord of Hearts to the failing Rādhā.

‘Sly singer, you knew how to end our quarrel,’
Rādhā murmurs.

She has recovered her soft fashion of speaking. She is joyful because she understands that Krishna has disguised himself as a woman to bring about their reconciliation. Grief stands far off from her, and happiness invades the place of it.

Come now, O milkmaids, to see Rādhā in the arms of Krishna. Our glances tremble.

Ah, nameless marvel of a Stream running love

Chandīdāsa

and nectar ! Two so fair have not been seen in Gokula, spoken in Gokula, dreamed in Gokula. The wood of Vrindāvana is lighted by their perfect union, the milkmaids exult, and *Chandīdāsa is in ecstasy, for he sees Rādhā in the arms of her lover.*

Five young women rub those two bodies with paste of sandal and agor. One fans them and looks down upon their beauty, soft beneath the kisses of the fan. One prepares garlands for the neck of Shāma. One serves the desire of those two bodies.

Eight high-born milkmaids have abandoned all for Rādhā and Krishna, they have troubled delight itself, they have attained salvation.

This is how Krishna celebrates Rāsalīlā. He sings the flowers that are rising in his soul.

He sings, and the trees about him put forth new honey-dripping flowers. The peacock and the peahen, and the lark and the swans come forward, coupled in their kind, to circle this Nagar and Nagara.

The wasp and the hornet murmur in drunkenness among the flower nectar. The water creatures come up from the river, each male with his female. The lotus opens, and the noise of the insects about it is a song of paradise.

Rādhā and Krishna

The beasts wander that green bower, the hind and the hart, the monkey and the monkey, and Rādhā delights to see them.

‘Listen, O Shāma, O Prince of Love,’ says Rādhā. ‘There is a prayer I have shame to make before your red feet.’

‘I would not know how to oppose your wishes.’ So Rādhā continues in a half voice :

‘I dream of having my hair tressed even as your hair is. Help me to do so. Then lend me your bamboo flute and teach me how to play it. That is my hid desire, and I have a haste toward it.’

The Prince of Love gives Rādhā a long smiling look. ‘Prince’s daughter, I will teach you to play upon the bamboo flute.’

But first he sinks at the foot of the tree to tress the hair of Rādhā.

He gives her a mirror to hold in her left hand, and then he adorns her. He wonderfully braids the hair of Rādhā, mingling garlands of jasmine within it, whose odour draws the bees, and a chain of diamond, blinding them.

He decks the diadem of his well-belovèd with new peacock feathers, and decorates her robe with pearl and coral-seed.

He lengthens the snaring line of kohl beneath



Chandīdāsa

each eye, even to her bright ears. He wipes away the vermilion tinting the division of her hair, and the mark of yellow earth upon her cheek, and sets on Rādhā's brow a single drop of sandal paṣṭe and musk.

He rubs her body with aguru,* and knots a yellow belt over her blue robe. He ties sounding gold bells about each ankle.

The Lover adorns his lover, and then looks upon her face.

‘O Rāī,’ he says, ‘you must take the musician's pose, if you would play upon the bamboo flute. Then shall the flute give you a first pleasure already. Afterwards I will teach you how to play it.

‘Do as I do. Rise on the points of your toes, and bend your left leg at the knee and cross it over your right foot. Turn your head to the left and thus, standing in three flexions, speak with your bamboo flute, and play your game.’

Rādhā gilded, Rādhā renewed, Rādhā transported, glitters for joy. She rises into the pose of three flexions, and the Prince of Shepherds teaches her to hold the bamboo flute. He guides her fingers over the openings, and Rādhā blows into the reed.

‘Sing melody, breathe a sweet sound, and do not stop,’ says Krishna. ‘I could learn all

Rādhā and Krishna

things from you,' she answers with a smile, 'but little by little only.'

'You are doubtless,' Krishna says, 'somewhat frightened by the presence of your companions.'

. . .

'O Symbol of Wisdom,' answers Rādhā, 'let us play together on the same flute and know a sweeter music.'

He smiled and began to breathe into the flute also ; the names of Rādhā and Krishna rose in one melody, and content swept over the hearts of those who heard them.

Under their united breaths so penetrating a song went up that it brought life to dead trees, and the waters of Yamunā, fainting below their bank, were troubled and lived again.

'Teach me to play well, Hari,' murmurs Rādhā. 'Tell me which note corresponds to which opening in the bamboo flute, and what sound we make by blowing into it. Tell me which word of love each says. We have ten fingers and play with seven only. Tell me the secret of each finger.'

. . .

'O player upon the bamboo flute, whose spirit is deep in ours, God has fulfilled my dream, for you have made me play upon the flute. Yet

C h a n d ī d ā s a

my heart is not altogether tranquil yet, so play alone now.

‘The milkmaids feel the one happiness in hearing you, the day and night pass by like dreams when you are playing. Let us hear song being born upon your mouth.

‘I do not know what you mean, but your music is suave poison, stealing into my heart and biting exquisitely.

‘When I see a snake, I lose all consciousness ; it is the same when the snake of your music rises within me.

‘Sometimes your music is a river of love, and sometimes a river of poison ; and yet again it is a river fatal and very sweet.’

Lotus-eyed Krishna says to the milkmaids :

‘I have a thought.’ And his face shows how hard he struggles to express it to them. Suddenly, sparkling with joy, he tells them the dream of his heart :

‘Here in this changed Vrindāvana and on this jewelled throne, I wish my Rādhā to be anointed King. I will sing her glory above the glory of women, I will mount guard by her standard, I will hold the royal umbrella over her.’

Rādhā, the herdsman’s wife, murmurs in smiling surprise :

Rādhā and Krishna

‘Is not what he says most singular?’

But all the women cry : ‘Your will be done, O Krishna, for in you abides our true salvation. The day of high delight has dawned for us. We would never have dared to dream of such felicity. O Prince of Learning, make Rādhā King in these places, and we will bow down drunkenly before her.’

There is joy not only in their faces, but in the folds of their garments.

They cull the water lotus of the Yamunā together with land lotuses, and gather the champak and the nāgeswara, the jasmine and madhobi. They pluck the kānadā and the fair red dhatki and the pale blossoms of the other jasmine, with flowers of the oleander, exquisite roses, and seductive chamelī.

One milkmaid plants banana shoots about the throne, near to gold water jars covered with mango branches.

Another anoints the throne with tamarind essence and diversity of perfumes.

She also pours water over the feet of Rādhā until it seems as if many fountains had come to spill there.

And in that green bower the milkmaids sing together in honour of Rādhā, making their shells and little bells resound.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

Nagar takes part in these preparations with a suitable music.

Then, when the bath is over, he dresses Rādhā. He fastens her joyful diadem and stars it. He covers her with a blue robe, and thus the gilded Rādhā shows like the moon.

Then, while the milkmaids sing their benediction, he seats her upon the throne, and the throne shines.

The girls cry *bulus* of an infinite joy.

They bring herbs to scatter over Rāī's head, together with rice grains. They anoint perfumed betel upon her temples and set a water jar before her, with offerings of fruit and milk and flowers.

A row of lamps is lighted by the throne, and Rāī is sprinkled with water from the golden ewer. Then she is sprinkled with tender sandal, and then with profound musk, with paste of agor and with thuya essence.

Scented flowers are sown throughout that arbour, and the bees pursue them.

The glory of Rāī is sung upon the vīnā and the tambour, with conches and cymbals, with the music of Madana, with the pākhvāj* and the harmonious flute.

The milkmaids utter songs of blessing, in accord

Rādhā and Krishna

with the Vedas, and cluster round Rādhā upon her throne.

A peacock, amplified by a peahen, rounds his tail to be a frame behind the head of Rādhā.

The swan and the cuckoo, the blackbird and the dahuki sing about her ; the hornets murmur in time to the little bells.

• • •
Krishna sits at the right hand of Rādhā, and we see as it were a flame of fire within a cloud, a bee on a golden lotus.

• • •
‘Lo,’ says a milkmaid, ‘there are marvels appearing in the copper-coloured trees.

‘Are they fruits that so shine like moons ?

‘Whence come such moons, and why is the sun shining at moon time ? Gold flames are about the heads of the peacocks. What is the connection between all these things ?’

But another answers : ‘It is Rādhā and Krishna transfigured, who throw their halo.

‘Rādhā and Krishna are in everything.

‘In them and because of them the flowers are but one flower, though we see each separately.

‘The tresses of Rādhā seem to be serpents but are not. Moons are shining in her bright nails.’

• • •
Rāī and Syāma are one soul.

Chandīdāsa

She is all laced with him, their arms are confounded, metals in one alloy.

The Princess and the Prince of Love are but one body.

A love song is about that throne. Its jewels waver sweetly in the green arbour. It shines throughout all its pearl; a shade is above it, held by four pillars.

The scents of the two jasmines fill the bower, spilling down drunkenness; a multitude of hornets noise there. The moon-partridges whistle there, and coupled swans walk with the amorous peacocks.

The blackbirds and dahukis sing there with passion. Herons and the dark cuckoos infinitely repeat their cries to the glory of Krishna.

The hind and the hart lift their soft glances to the sky, the ascending lark scatters her note of joy, winging toward the brightness of that throne. The white bulls and the white cows wander in that green shade. It is lighted by Krishna, and upon his left is Rāī.

Exalted even to drunkenness, the women of Vraja sing to their harmonies. Their songs are borne up upon the beating of the tambour. Their songs are swift and deep, chiming with flute and vīnā.

Rādhā and Krishna

They sing and sing again, being drunken, and Chandīdāsa beholds them turning, turning endlessly, with a madness, with garments in disorder.

But these hours of happiness go by, and Krishna departs to walk in the woods of Vrindāvana with one of the girls. Therefore Rādhā goes out to seek him with her companions.

Rādhā, the fairest among them all, begins to weep and wanders to seek that one who walked with her lover.

She goes deep into the wood and finds the mark of Krishna's feet upon the ground, going beside the prints of the feet of the milkmaid.

‘See, she dragged Krishna thus in her delirious joy. And here he put vermilion on the brow of this woman. That is the pierced leaf he used. Here is a leaf stained by the kohl with which he adorned her. He put paste of sandal upon her arms, and here is proof of it.’

Rādhā's glances sparkle with flame. She falls from joy into a sombre mood, and covers her face again.

‘He has plucked wild flowers to cover her,’ she says. ‘He leaned on this branch in order to reach them, and, see, it has broken beneath his

C h a n d ī d ā s a

weight. What milkmaid is this who has taken Krishna ?’

Rādhā finds the milkmaid in the wood, lying alone and fainting upon the ground.

‘Why are you alone in this deep wood, my friend ?’ asks Rādhā. ‘Why do you lie upon the earth with no care for clothes or jewels?’

‘I have great shame in answering. I am unhappy. I have committed an error.

‘When all Vrindāvana was murmurous with Rāsalīlā, and the first hours of the morning rose among the woken milkmaids, you yourself wished Krishna to take you upon his shoulder, and he was angry and left you. He led me into the wood instead of you, and told me things that bowed me down with joy.

‘But my pride was also to be wounded by his pride. I asked the same, that he would take me upon his shoulder. He vanished, and all my joy went with him. I am alone and despairing in the deep wood.’

And moon-faced Rādhā hears and suffers.

‘O my friends, what may we do now?’ she says. ‘Death is our only shelter. Come down with me to the Yamunā, that we may die.’

All the women of Vraja determine to go down to the stream and drown themselves.

Rādhā and Krishna

But we are sure that Yadunātha will appear before it is too late, since he would not have the shadow of their death upon his conscience.

And we are right, for he appears and addresses them tenderly, so that all are filled with a complete drunkenness again.

‘O my love,’ says Rādhā, ‘you are without fleck, while I have had a fault since birth. It is that fault, I know, which made you angry.

‘I cannot sufficiently express myself, being simple and ignorant. But you know all, for you are Kalia. We understand that our ignorance shocks you, and that you are strong in your disapproval.

‘My love, I am awake to you even in my dreams. O Ocean of Compassion, pardon me. Tree of Desire, pardon me.

‘As soon as I felt their coolness, I put myself under the protection of your two most lotus feet.

‘To torture the innocent cannot add to your greatness. Whither did you go when you left the wood?’

But when he hears how Rādhā thus beseeches him, dark Krishna says :

‘O Rādhā, I am vowed to you in my body and in my spirit. If for a moment I cease to look

Chandīdāsa

upon you, good life leaves me. O face of the moon, my eyes are happy with you.'

Smiling, he began to wind her about with his tenderness. He was prodigal of words of love, and fixed a long, lowered look upon her.

'Do not think of that which is past, O my love, for your heart and my heart were for ever joined, and for ever shall be.'

The Prince of Love looks round upon the delighted milkmaids, *and Chandīdāsa joyfully sings: 'Never, never, have I known of such a love!'*

The feast of Rāsalīlā is ended. All the milkmaids return home, and Krishna goes back to his dwelling.

Rādhā and Krishna

XXV

THE night is over. It is dawn, and yet that moon which is Shāma's face is rising. He washes himself in perfumed water, and Yasodā * tenderly brings him fortifying cream and milk.

She lifts them, turn and turn about, to the lips of Krishna, and tenderly says to him :

‘You are going to the wood, and I am frightened. They are telling strange stories. It seems that the spies of Kansa are wandering to find you.’

‘Fear nothing, mother,’ Kanu answers. ‘Have I not received the benediction of your two feet as safeguard? What can the evil spies of Kansa do against me? I hardly think of them. I can destroy all the thousands of Kansa with a single wink. O troubled mother, you may give me my clothes without misgiving.’

Thus Krishna speaks, answering the tender words of his mother. Thus of his wise intelligence he consoles her,

*according to the poet
Chandīdāsa.*

End of Part Two

PART
III
THE JOURNEY TO MATHURA

Rādhā's Dream

RĀDHĀ, WAKING EARLY, SAID TO HER friends :

‘ If you knew of what I had dreamed your hearts could not hold out for apprehension ; I saw and heard prodigious things. You who still have your reason, explain my dream to me.’

Then all cried : ‘ Speak quickly, Rādhā, for we burn to hear you.’ And Rādhā laid forth her dream :

‘ It was at dawn and I was loſt in a deep sleep. I saw myself walking with Barai on the road to Gokula, for we wished to sell our milk there. I saw a man coming towards us in a chariot. I ſtopped him, to ask whither he was going and his name and all that concerned him. And he said : “ My name is Akrūra, and I have come to lead Krishna and Balarāma to the palace of King Kansa.” I felt troubled at these words, and returned home swiftly.’

The milkmaids were troubled also, and said to Rādhā :

‘ Be very calm, for you well know that only one out of a hundred dreams comes true.’

The princess continued : ‘ After that moment of the night I could not shut my eyes. My

Rādhā and Kṛishna

heart is haunted. I fear that my waking happiness is threatened.'

'Rādhā, your story has made us understand the trouble of your soul most clearly. It would be good to consult an astrologer,' suggested one of the women. 'If you are afraid that your dream may come true, let one of us go to a priest and question him.'

A milkmaid went to the temple and set flowers upon the head of Gaurī.

'If the flower falls,' said the priest, 'there will be no danger.'

But the flower stayed upon the head of the goddess, and the priest said: 'A great misfortune, whose kind I know not yet, weighs upon Gokula.'

'O milkmaid,' sings the Brahmin Chandīdāsa, 'dreams are not always false. I have heard that some of them sometimes come true.'

Soon they hear that Kṛishna is making ready to go to Mathura.

His uncle Kansa does in truth send Akrūra as a messenger, to lead him to a religious festival. The man seeks for him at his foster-mother's house, and Kṛishna, as also his half-brother Balarāma, is obliged to accept the invitation because of its sacred nature.

The night before his departure has now come, and all the people are weeping.

Chandīdāsa

XXVII

RĀDHĀ says: 'Deep night is stretched over the sky, and presently the morning will be born.

'O Night, I beg you to stay, to cover us with your dark robe.

'O Moon, do not take up your dawn position, nor put on your morning face. Stay, O stay as you are now.'

'Listen to me, O Rāī,' says one of the milkmaids; 'I know a way to succeed in what you wish: so that none may see when she assumes her morning face, we will cover up the moon with our sārīs.'

Another says: 'We will go and be like Rahu, eclipsing all of her. Then none shall see the coming of dawn, and so shall our dear master, and so shall the king of the world, stay near us. Or else I shall imitate evil auspices, to appear to the eyes of Krishna and prevent him going.'

'I will be the jackal passing Krishna on the right,' said a third.

'I will rise in his path in the likeness of a hermit,' a fourth suggested.

And yet another said: 'I shall become thunder and in my breaking kill Akrūra.'

'And thus,' reasons the poet *Chandīdāsa*, '*Krishna will be constrained to stay at Gokula.*'

Srī-Krishna is on the point of departure. Yasodā and Robini are lamenting. Robini is the mother of Balarāma and a further wife of Vasudeva, Krishna's father.

Rādhā and Krishna

XXVIII

YASODĀ and Rohini weep, looking upon the moon face of their Krishna.

Upon a plaintive modulation Yasodā sighs :
 ‘ O Krishna, how may my spirit be without
 you? How may it live far from that treasure
 which you are to me? It would be better to
 kill me, for my maternal heart has lost all
 resting. It shakes me, and I do not know what
 has become of the soul of my life. To whom
 shall I carry milk and cream, O moon-faced
 Krishna? How shall I continue in my
 sorrow ?

‘ Listen, O Nanda, my husband : when Krishna has gone, we will leave our dwelling, and I will set it on fire. What is the worth of life, how may we cleave to her, when we have lost the very fruit of our eyes ? My prayer to God has been in vain.

‘ O Krishna, turn and look upon your mother for this last time. Tell me who has persuaded you to go. Have you carefully thought upon the matter? All Gokula will die in a torment of grief during your absence. All the children of Vraja, remembering your graces, will refuse to live without you.

'Who will drive the cows to pasture? Who

C h a n d ī d ā s a

will start the games in the meadow? We shall not hear your voice or your sweet words at the time of the driving of the flock. To whom shall I give cream and milk and butter? And who will call me mother now? '

Nanda, the husband of Yasodā, weeping, passes his arms about his wife, while *the poet Chandīdāsa bursts into tears, holding the foot of the excellent mother of Krishna.*

During this time, Rādhā, who had been told of these things, comes down into Gokula.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

X X I X

The Lamentation of Rādhā

‘ O Kalia, I cannot let you go. Say all you will, but I shall drown myself in the waters of the Yamunā. I will be born again as you, O Krishna, and when I am the son of Nanda, you shall be Rādhā. You shall know grief in your turn who to-day remain unknowing.

‘ O lotus-eyed Krishna, I have forgotten all for you, my name and family renown. My sister-in-law and my mother-in-law used to love me as their ear-rings, but now the sight of me can burn their eyes. They make me suffer because of their words by day and night.

‘I have abandoned all for you. Are you ungrateful? Or is it worthy of you to leave me so?’

‘ You made my love grow under the tenderness of your smile, and caused me to break most holy bonds. How can you wish to go to Mathura ? All the milkmaids are resolved to die. What price shall we set upon the light if the idol of our heart be far from us ?

‘ It is ever you, O Kalia : you in my dreams,
and you before my eyes. You in my waking,
and you within my sleeping.

Chandīdāsa

‘ Kalia of my heart, O Kalia of my remorse, the thought of you is with me when I eat.

‘ The thought of you is with me when I walk. I say over your name ; I love you endlessly and carry your image about with me, O Kalia.

‘ If my eyes are turned to the sky, the blue tinting of the clouds gives me a dream of your body. My guilty spirit knows sweet satisfaction : the fountain of love rises and weeps in her.

‘ I stand with my eyes fixed upon anything that shows the dark colouring of your colour.

‘ I wear your scarf, and it is as blue as the hair upon my head.

‘ Because musk is dark like you, O Kalia, I rub myself with it.

‘ I keep your garland of scented flowers. I take delight in looking upon the plumage of peacocks because it is blue, and when there are no peacocks about me, I take a blown lotus and look at it until the hunger of my eyes is fed.

‘ I pluck atasi flowers and wear them with devotion. I move through you alone and suffer for you, and you wish to leave me.

‘ Sometimes my sad heart also weeps. My spirit is often alarmed, as if there were a fire in its neighbourhood. I am without rest when I do not see you.

Rādhā and Krishna

‘ O Krishna, I am altogether vowed to your two god-like feet ; I know nothing in all the world but your two feet.

‘I try to calm my heart, and yet it rustles like
a leaf, and I fall to weeping.

‘ Oh, that your love might stay for ever with me, O Krishna! If you leave me, you mortify me in the eyes of the world, you wound my woman’s pride.

‘ Oh, that your love might stay with me for ever, Krishna. I try to be strong, but my heart has forgotten how. Ah, stay in Gokula for ever. ’

‘Master, lift up your face and speak to me but once only. My happiness is drawing toward a close. You go to Mathura and break our womanish hearts.

‘ I have said so much to you, I have said so many things to you, O Yadumuni, that I have nothing left to say.

‘Your red feet know my heart. Why are you so cruel?’

‘ I will take you into the solitude of my chamber, and there watch over you by night and day. I will fan you with fans. I will stretch you on a flower-bed, I will touch your feet, and give you a box of betel scented with anise. I will put betel scented with anise in your mouth, and your wearinesses shall depart. I will wash your

C h a n d ī d ā s a

feet and cover them with an essence of thuya and of sandal. Whither would you go, disdainng such happiness? Rest, O Krishna of my spirit, I pray you rest.'

And the Brahmin Chandīdāsa also implores him, saying: ' O Krishna, whither shall we go to dwell without your presence? '

Rādhā and Krishna

X X X

AND the herdsmen also lamented :

‘ O player upon the bamboo flute, where are you going? Whither are you departing, to make us grieve? We do not know that, or what you mean, or why you let our love for you so grow.

‘ With whom shall we live now? Your picture is in the deep of our eyes. Ever we see you in our dreams, and think of you, eating and walking. How can we forget our love, lotus-eyed Krishna? ’

Thus the herdsmen weep in their passion, looking upon the face of Krishna. In the great disorder of their grief, they sink along the road, sighing :

‘ O Krishna, we shall hear your tender words no more. We shall play with you no more, though the cows are at pasture; we shall hear the singing of your bamboo flute no more. We shall no more answer at the day’s end when you say “ friend ” and “ brother.” ’

Krishna answers : ‘ I am constrained to go, but I shall return. Do not be grieved, O Rāī. I know the sweetness of your heart. It is filled full of love. I shall indeed return.’

C h a n d ī d ā s a

Then he mounts into Nanda's chariot, while Nanda urges the bullocks forward.

The milkmaids bar his way, and Rādhā, falling to the earth, stretches her arms across the path of the car.

‘ Go if you must, but only by killing Rādhā ! ’
cry the women of Vraja, and would hold back the chariot.

They cry and roll in the dust.

Also Chandīdāsa, suffering Rādhā's own despair, goes to the Prince of Love with clasped hands, to beg him to give some further explanation.

Rādhā and Krishna

XXXI

After the Going of Krishna

ALL the cows low to Mathura, for the Prince of Love has gone that way. The sad calves no longer suck the udders, they leave them to rush with lifted tails toward Mathura.

The sad stags will not eat. Their unquiet eyes are filled with tears, looking along the road of Krishna.

The voice of the red-billed cuckoo, a melody once desirable, now sounds no more among the desolate branches. Yet certain of the birds repeat the name of Shāma all through the day and night most sadly. But the moon-partridge and the dahuki and all the swallows are dumb with grieving.

And the swan and the parakeet and the heron are dumb with grieving.

They stay still and weep silently, and none knows whither their voices have gone.

The hornets have ceased to murmur. The world is laid low by the departure of Krishna. The children and the young men and the old men of the city are now in tears.

. . .

Krishna goes toward Mathura with Balarāma, and on the way he steals, from the washer-

C h a n d ī d ā s a

man of King Kansa, garments of the royal family.

Balarāma and Krishna dress themselves as warriors in the stolen garments. But Kansa, who has heard of these things, sends out an elephant to fight with the two audacious young men. In the course of the battle the elephant loses his tusks, and flees in great fright.

Then the King sends two known warriors, Chānāra and Mushtika, against them. But these are also driven back.

Krishna enters the palace, and kills his uncle Kansa. The people of Mathura crown him king.

He sets his father Vasudeva and his mother Devakī free, whom Kansa has kept prisoner for many years.

Rādhā and Krishna

XXXII

DEVAKĪ, the mother of Krishna, says : ‘ My son, O Yadumuni, where have you stayed so long and far from me ? My heart was dying.

‘ Let me fill my eyes with the sight of you, my son, seeing your moon face.

‘ How could Kansa have sent such a son away from me into Gokula? Grief has been eating me for many years. My heart became sick, and the flesh dropped away from me. But now I have found the fruit of my eyes again. O lamp of my heart, sight of my glances, where have you been throughout the long day ? ’

She takes Yadumuni over her knees, and gives him milk to drink and butter and cream to eat. And all the Brahmins tell Krishna of the eyes of marvel, Krishna incomparable, the secret of his birth and the story of his life.

Preparations are made for great feasting because Krishna has found the folk of his own blood again.

When Nanda, Krishna’s adopted father, drives back into Gokula, the crowd, who hear the rumbling of his chariot, run out to meet him, hoping to see the god again.

Yasodā and Rohini hasten, desiring to embrace their sons. And at the sight of the empty

Chandīdāsa

car they stand stricken as if they were dead trees.

They cry : ‘Where are our Krishna, our Balarāma ?’

The herdsmen and the milkmaids, having run along the bank of the Yamunā upon the impulsion of their heart, now stay as stones.

‘Where is he?’ Yasodā cries. ‘I do not see him. I do not see him.’

And Nanda answers, weeping gently :

‘They have both stayed in far Mathura. They have stayed there without me. Why do you come to ask them of me? I have lost my Krishna. I have lost my Balarāma. I return to my labour alone. It seemed to me that the thunder beat upon my head. They let me depart alone with my great grief.’

He comes down out of the chariot, lamenting aloud and blinded by his tears. He has to be held on either side before he can walk, and *the heart of Chandīdāsa is filled with agony.*

. . .

Yasodā says : ‘Where can I go to find Krishna and Balarāma ? They two were the treasure and light of the world. What can I say to those who approach me concerning them?’

‘My spirit is near my sons.

‘O Nanda, my husband, I wish to go there. I will stretch out my arm, and take my sombre-

Rādhā and Krishna

tinted child again, my child with a strange Destiny. I will set him on my knee, and lift up milk to his lips.

‘ And have a certain happiness.

‘ Let us go and see our two children, my husband.

‘ I will kiss their faces. I will take care of them.’

Yasodā and Rohini weep by turns, and know no peace.

They weep daily and nightly, repeating : ‘ O Krishna, Krishna ! ’

And the poet Chandīdāsa says : ‘ The fruit of our eye has stayed in Mathura. Krishna has left us all. The thunder is pouring down upon my head.’

Chandīdāsa

XXXIII

The Lamentation of Rādbā

‘MY belovèd, my well-belovèd is in Mathura. He said that he would return, but he has not kept his promise. His heart is as hard as stone or as the thunder.

‘I live only in an impatient waiting for his return. I rise and I seat myself and I rise again. I look endlessly at the long road. My eyes are dim.

‘Can anyone tell me when the son of Nanda will come back to Vraja? He is my content; how shall I live without him?

‘My treasure has stayed in the city on the other side of the river. I would be a bird and fly to him, but God has not given me wings.

‘If I knew how to swim, I would dive into the Yamunā and cross it and be with him.

‘But I do not know how to swim, and we cannot stay the Yamunā by drawing all his water in our jars.

‘The name of Mathura terrifies me. O Barai, Barai, I wish to see Kanu. When may I hold him in my arms? He is the light of Gokula.

‘He was mine to me, even a jewel, and by my carelessness I lost him.

Rādhā and Kṛishna

‘ When I would throw myself into the fire, the flames die down before me.

‘ When I would hide in their night the caves all close against me.

‘ I seek succour near some tree, and the tree denies me his shadow. He for whom I live is cruel to me.

‘ O Barai, the year is reaching its end ; the Spring is to be born again. The madhobi opens, the cuckoo makes his song near me, and the hornets are murmurous.

‘ Of what use to me are my hair and my sārī, if my well-belovèd stays in Mathura ?

‘ The youth of my body, which was a gem to me, means less than a fragment of glass now he is gone.

“ My Prince of Love lives doubtless with another woman. He is in a far city.

‘ Who is this seduction who holds my amorous hornet in her charm ? Rise, O my friend, and go to Mathura. Speak of me to him. Try to find out if he will ever return.

‘ I will go to live in the forest, like Sītā who left Rāma and was an exile in the woods.

‘ I will live alone in the forest, lost in meditation and seeing no one.

‘ I will gather fruits and roots and the wild

Chandīdāsa

flowers. I will wipe the vermillion from my brow, and my untended hair shall grow into great mats.

‘I shall go to the forest, carrying my love within me in my heart. Perhaps my grief shall sleep in the forest while my love is waking.

‘I cannot abide in this agony. What use have I for a house? I know that my Lord is cruel and that he has left us.’

Barai lets fall her head and answers :

‘Speak and speak, my pretty Rādhā. Words bring relief, and by listening I shall help you.’

Rādhā suffers the pain of infinite love.

She goes into the wood, and the sight of the kadamba tortures her.

She goes to the ghat of the Yamunā where she first saw Krishna and felt fire.

She sees the place where the Prince of Love once stole the robes of the milkmaids as a jest. She is stricken with bitterness and can think of nothing.

She sees the madhobi, and it pictures her meeting with Krishna, so that her tears flow down.

She sees the place where the Prince of Love made her his lover, and dies down upon the earth.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

And again she says : ‘ My friend, now go to Kanu of the lotus eyes and tell him that the river of my happiness has dried away, and that therefore my soul is thirsting.

‘ Take Kanu’s hand in yours and cease not to speak of the boon of his return to me.

‘ God has gone up against all the desires which cross my heart in sleep, which cross my heart in waking and in dreaming.

‘ I am innocent and can no more bear this grief.

‘ Try to read in the heart of Kanu. Practise upon him until he comes to us.’

So sings the Brahmin Chandīdāsa.

Chandīdāsa

XXXIV

THE messenger came to Mathura, and said to Krishna :

‘ O friend of Kobunja*, have you abandoned
the moon-faced Rāī ?

‘ O Prince, O wearer of the turban, Rādhā has sent me hither to bring back to your mind a certain signature, of which we all were witnesses.

‘You wrote your name upon one of her feet,
on a day when you came to her as a barber.

‘When you return to Vraja, the people will heap reproaches upon you, yet they will sound joyful cymbals.

‘ Seeing you so fair, Rāī, as we take a coloured
bird in a snare, tangled you in her glances.

‘She kept you in her heart’s cage, binding your life to her life with chains of the spirit.

‘ She fed you with nectar and taught you to say Rādhā, Rādhā. But the bird became unfaithful, he broke the bars of her heart, and flew away to this strange city.

‘I sought him for her a long while. I learned that Kobunja had caught him in this place. Now Rāi sends me to fetch her jewelled bird.

‘You are cruel. How can you thus live far away from Rādhā, the symbol of love?’

Rādhā and Krishna

‘She weeps by day and night, and knows no sleep. She loses her wits and does not answer, she stays still and hides her face under her hand. Her tears fall wet upon her robe.

‘She went to sit at the foot of the kadamba ; her sorrow became two sorrows.

‘She does not eat her daily rice. She does not drink. Her dreams are endless.

‘Sometimes she cries : “My love, my love !” and for a moment comes to life again.

‘O Kanu, she may be cured if you return.’

Krishna’s heart breaks when he hears these things.

‘Let us go swiftly,’ he says. ‘I desire to see Rādhā.

‘How could I forget that gilded loveliness which was part of my dreams and sleeping ?

‘I live at Mathura, but I see her in night vision, and when I think by day.

‘She is by my side when I walk and when I lie down. I remember Rādhikā and her delights, even in my laughter.

‘To whom shall I tell my agony ? I cannot say it, yet my soul is aware of it.

‘My unresting heart sees Rādhā ; I play nothing except her name upon my bamboo flute.

‘Say to her that she is my lover and that I am

C h a n d ī d ā s a

ever telling, as if they were a prayer, the sounds of her name over upon my fingers.

‘Go now before me, and say my messages. I will follow, and surely see her at the last.’

So sings the poet Chandīdāsa.

Krishna goes forth from the palace. He leaves Mathura and hastens back to Rādhā.

End of Part Three

**PART
IV
REUNION**



‘MY FRIEND,’ RĀDHĀ SAYS, ‘THE EVIL DAYS are drawing towards an end and happiness is born. Come to the temple of the madhobi tree, to the temple of Krishna, since I have happy forecastings.

‘My hair waves in the small wind ; my robe has fallen under the ardency of my youth. The lids of my left eye are twitching, and my necklace is moving on my breast.

‘I saw the crows coupling at dawn, and sharing food, and coming to perch near me to sing of my love’s return.

‘The betel fell from my lips, and the flower which they had put on the head of the goddess Gaurī has also fallen.’

One of Rādhā’s companions came smiling to her, and said :

‘O face of the Moon, rise up, so that the pain of your heart may cease. Your evil days are drawing to their end. The madhobi appears before you, therefore arise.’

Rādhā, hearing, cannot constrain herself ; she raises delighted eyes and sees her lover.

‘Come to me, come to me,’ she murmurs, smiling and stretching forth her arms.

‘Come to me, for I have found my

Rādhā and Krishna

treasure for ever. The suffering in my heart is dead.'

And her companions sing the ocean of their joy about her.

. . .

She wipes the feet of Krishna with her long hair, and seats him on a bed of marvel.

She rubs his limbs with musk and aguru and sandal.

She spreads perfumed water over him ; she washes his two feet carefully.

She hangs a garland of lyric flowers about the neck of Krishna.

She looks upon his beauty and is drunken. She does not turn away her eyes.

The face of Kanu is the full moon, and Rāī is as the snared moon-partridge, drinking the source of love.

. . .

'What shall I say to you, my well-belovèd, except that you shall be Lord of me in this life and in all my lives ?

'I will bind your feet in a noose of love, woven from the substance of my soul.

'I have dedicated my being to you, and become your servant.

'None other lives for me in the three worlds, of sky and earth and hell.

C h a n d ī d ā s a

‘ I will rise up for none other, answering to the sweet name of Rādhā.

‘ None other shall be mine in my two lives.

‘ I put myself under the protection of your lotus feet, because they are cool and tender.

‘ Do not deceive me, for I am innocent. You cannot do so, being a god.

‘ I could not dwell without the Lord of my soul to stay me.

‘ My spirit dies if I cease from looking upon your face.

‘ I carry you as an amulet by my heart, O Krishna.

• • •
‘ O my love, what shall I say to you ? You know my heart and my thought, my works and my belief.

‘ Joyful I run to take refuge in your bounty.

‘ Because you adore me, the world bows down to me, though I cannot understand what may be lovable of mine.

‘ My father and my mother and the city of Vraja venerate me.

‘ The adoration of my milkmaids, who respect me whether I be chaste or unchaste, makes my heart tender.

‘ My soul is yours ; it expands within your joy.

Rādhā and Krishna

‘ Your words are as ornaments to my body.

‘ O Krishna, I would dress myself in your robe.

• • •

‘ My lover, I have known your love since I was a child in my father’s house, and you have not wished me to dwell among my people.

‘ I shall make plans to drown myself in the sea.

‘ I shall die, and in my other birth I shall be Krishna, the son of Nanda, I shall make you Rādhā.

‘ I shall have myself loved of you, I shall abandon you as you have abandoned. I shall stand at the foot of the kadamba tree, upright in three flexions, as ever you have.

‘ I shall sing in my bamboo flute when you pass down to Yamunā.

‘ And you shall be snared by that singing, O sweet, ingenuous and well-born woman.

‘ Thus you shall know love’s sorrow.

• • •

‘ You are the jewel that assures me happiness.

‘ My body more than gilds itself in coming against your body. You are the sign of love, and you are the sign of love.

‘ We are but ignorant milkmaids, not knowing how to adore you.

‘ When I wander seeking you in the woods, a single minute is more than a hundred times twelve years.

Chandīdāsa

‘ I rub my body with musk and sandal because they have the blue colour of your body.

‘ Your two feet are upon my heart ; I clasp them and shut my eyes.

‘ Krishna of all marvel, O my single memory, my life has no other knowledge.

‘ Krishna is my life, Krishna is the treasury of my soul, Krishna is my collar. He is as my garments ; I carry him for ever with me, like a sārī.

‘ Krishna of my heart, and of my body and of my soul, Krishna, my meditation and my adoration, O Krishna, I have become your servant.

‘ Krishna is my peculiar treasury, he is all my power, he is my caste, and my renown.

‘ Krishna is the tree of happiness.

‘ God has given me the inestimable treasure of Krishna, and the cuckoo sings ; the hornet murmurs because my king is in my arms.’

Krishna smiles tenderly at Rāī, and says to her :

‘ Who may know your youth and your wisdom ? The joy of your youth is without price, my Rādhā.

‘ Your heart is bound to my heart everlastingly, your soul to my soul for ever.

Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

‘ For your sake I became a herder of cows in the house of Nanda.

‘ I abandoned the blue fields of the sky, and came to the earth fields of Gokula.

‘ I sing the sweet sounds of your name for ever, and you know it. I think of you solely, and my happiness would faint without you.

• • •

‘ Rāī, you are the instigation of my life.

‘ I sit on the bank of the Yamunā to see you bathing.

‘ I wait at the foot of the kadamba tree to watch your beauty.

‘ Beautiful young lover, I look on every side as the lark glances ; I am on timid alert for the tenderness of your face.

‘ I am drunken with your love ; my imagination is exhausted by you ; it sings you for ever.

• • •

‘ I dream of you when I wake, O my young lover, and in my meditation.

‘ You are as my collar.

‘ My lover is my reason for adoring.

‘ The feet of my young lover are all to me.

‘ I think of her in my walking.

‘ She is my meditation before I eat.

‘ Rādhā, do not withdraw your feet from my feet, for they depend on you.

‘ I am your slave.

Chandīdāsa

‘ I am the yellow robe you wear.

‘ More mercy shall be shown to him who has adored my Rādhā for a minute of time than to him who has adored myself for a million times twelve years.

‘ Rādhā alone has power and access with me.

‘ All is dark in my heart without this Rādhā.

‘ O Rāī, O sign of love, I feel that I am dying when I do not see you.

‘ Your love and the story of your joy make all my learning.

‘ Rādhā, I wear the yellow robe of your delight, and I sing.

‘ Your greatness and glory are held in the two notes of Rādhā. I tell your name over on my fingers, as if it were a prayer, by night and day.

‘ All is dark without you, O Rāī, all is without hope. Rādhā, my life, my light.’

*And the Brahmin Chandīdāsa eternally
sings the Splendour of Rādhā
and Krishna.*

The End.

NOTES

Chandīdāsa

The Sanskrit form of native words has been generally adopted as being the more consistent; but it might be borne in mind, as a rough guide, that in Bengali *v* is pronounced as *b*, *a* as *o*, *s* as *sh*, and *e* generally as French *é*.

Hari

It has not been thought necessary to point out the changes rung throughout on the many names of Krishna.

The Lord of Umā

Shiva.

domri

Narrow-waisted drum.

chamaras

Fly-whisks of cow tails.

left

It was the custom to take the pulse of a woman's left wrist, and of a man's right.

Hastinagara

Ancient Delhi; see also Amaru, 16.

vulture

All these are classic comparisons in Bengali verse.

Rāsālīlā

A love festival taking place in early Autumn.

white

The widow's colour.

vīṇā

Instrument of strings stretched on a long fretted finger-board over two gourds.

<i>rāga</i>	Mode.
<i>aguru</i>	A fragment of aloe wood paste.
<i>pākhvāj</i>	Loud finger-drum.
<i>Yasodā</i>	Krishna's nurse and foster-mother, to whom he was taken after the miraculous birth in prison at Mathura.
<i>Kobunja</i>	Krishna's mistress in Mathura.

*Amores of Amaru
and Mayūra from
the Sanskrit*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

AMARU

IT appears astonishing that these poems should, if I except one which I myself suggested in Coloured Stars, be the first introduction of this poet into English; for Amaru was, from our modern point of view, one of the supreme early lyric poets of the East, perhaps not very much less startling and satisfying than Li Po and Tu Fu among the Chinese. Amaru has often been compared as love lyrist with Bhartrhari and Bilhana, but he was, though this may by no means be obvious through my interpretation, whole centuries ahead of either of them in subtlety. Amaru holds among scholars, at least, the highest distinction as a poet of the phases of love: desire and attainment, estrangement and reconciliation, joy and sorrow.

There are many theories and rumours concerning his time and identity, but A. B. Keith says with authority: 'He figures as one of the gems of the Court of Vikramāditya, but it is impossible to suppose that he was really a contemporary of Kālidāsa. We definitely know that he dates before Anandavardhana, and that he cannot be later, therefore, than about A.D. 800.'

It is possible that a reading, even at third hand, will make clear how the legend arose that Amaru was the hundred and first incarnation of a soul which had previously occupied a hundred women.

Amaru's Century of poems was only discovered soon after 1800, his supplementary fragments and the 'lyric counterpoints' to his work by pupils, only after 1900.

The poems which follow are not the original Century of Amaru, but a hundred selected from the complete available examples of his work and school. I have translated from the French versions of A. L. Apud and Franz Toussaint, and from the Italian of Umberto Norsa.

MAYŪRA

It seems feasible, in order to give an impression of Amaru as a poet born out of due time, to append an erotic fragment written by one who was more or less a contemporary, and adjudged a poet of considerable merit.

Mayūra, who flourished in the first half of the seventh century, was the father-in-law of the poet Bāna. His main work was the Sūryasataka, a hundred stanzas in praise of the sun. He was a favourite of King Harsa (606-647), and, apart from anthology stanzas, the only other indubitable writings of his that have come down to us are an erotic fragment, Mayūrāsataka (written, legend says, about his own daughter, and given as the cause of his leprosy), and the present fragment, recently edited with a French translation by M. Eugène Féval, a great authority on the Sanskrit lyric.

Apart from these last few repetitive and, I think, admirable lines, all Mayūra's work has had the advantage of brilliant editing and translation in English by George Payn Quackenbos, who issued his work in 1917.

*A comparison of such poets with
Amaru is contained in
my Terminal
Essay.*

AMARU

Man

I.

THE TENUOUS BAMBOO BRIDGE SPANNING the double tide of the Mālinī has been carried away, and now my handsome is cut off from me upon an island. Has her father enough black millet? The rain continues. Each night I climb up the hill from which I can see the trembling light of the house of Sarmichā. It shines in the wet darkness like a glance through tears.

2.

Her robe clung close to her body, and the tissue of it became transparent. I thank you, rain. You were, Sanābavī, as if you were naked. But, when the rainbow broke in flower, who warmed your little shivering breasts for you?

3.

If I had the talent of Vālmīki I would write a poem with my lover as heroine. The first ten parts would be given over to the ten fingers of her hands, for they wove a veil in which I have wrapped up all my ancient loves. And I would consecrate the ten others to the ten nights we spent at Mābhahāt.

Amores

4.

‘Pity!’ she says, with bruised breasts and disordered hair. With eyes closed and legs still trembling, ‘Finish!’ she says. She says in a choked voice: ‘It is enough!’ And now her silence grows eternal. Is she dead or sleeping, is she meditating in delight on what has happened, or thinking of another?

5.

My tender friend, my Sodarā, returns to her dwelling at sunset; Nārāyanī, the guardian of the temple, leaves me as soon as the star Asva is shining, and I sleep alone on my reed mat. Too seldom I dream Nārāyanī has stayed, caressing me until the dawn.

6.

I have seen you at your source, a child could have jumped over you, O river, a bunch of flowers deflected you. Here you are a wide flood, and might engulf this fine boat. Alas, Dayāmati! My love for Dayāmati!

7.

She makes me a precise salute, and withdraws her little feet under her fringes. She looks attentively at the flowers painted upon her fan. If I venture to caress her gazelle, she starts to

A m a r u

smooth the feathers of her painted parakeet. If I speak, she asks a question of one of her women. I find a thousand delights in her timidity.

8.

When you used to make dolls out of wet leaves, they always cried however much you rocked them. And once I told you to put your doll out in the sunlight. You have played with my heart since then and I have wept. But in the end I remembered my own advice, and my tears are dry for ever.

9.

This is the first time that the wind blows from the East, O Sadamī, O precious crown, and brings me the sound of the temple bell of Anāgarī. Soon the Five Flowers of Spring will be scenting my house, and you, the Sixth, will bring me in your hair the odour of the reed mat on which you have wept all Winter.

10.

If I told my pain to the torrent, the torrent would halt for me. If I told it to the palm tree, the tree would bend down about me. But you pass singing, and do not even regard me. I will tell my pain to the torrent. If the torrent does not halt for me, at least its water will refresh my

Amores

brow. I will tell my pain to the palm tree. If the palm tree does not bend down about me, at least it will shade my grief. Once more I have conquered shame and told you my suffering. You refuse me the water of your lips, the shade of your shadow.

11.

Your hair climbs down about your shoulders, and the forest of Vishamadita shelters the gilded temple of Misrakesi.

12.

A swan sought the silvered flowers of the kumuda on a pool at night, and was deceived by the reverberation of the stars in the crystal water. He pecked at the glittering reflection of the stars. At dawn he did not dare to eat the flowers of the sītopala, though they were white over all the pool. He was afraid that they were only stars. Do not go on telling me that you love me, Sarmichā.

No one has dared to speak of you to me since you went away. But I have said your name to the wind as he passed me, and to a certain man as he lay dying. If you are alive, O my mistress, the wind will some day meet you as he passes, and if you are dead, the dead man will tell you I have not forgotten.

14.

My thirst has redoubled since first I drank her lips. Nor am I astonished. There was much salt in that kissing.

15.

O Gāyatri, your love is more inconstant than the reflection of a branch in the water of a lake with boats. The lake is a mirror again when the boats have gone, but your heart is suspicious still when you have pardoned me.

16.

It matters little to me that I shall never behold the thousand gardens and intricate palaces of Hastināpura, since Māyā, Illusion, in the likeness of Pārvati, stays in my dwelling. It matters little to me that I shall never behold the smile of Siddhārta in the temple of Suddhōdana, since the smile of Māyā, his mother, is mine in the smile of Pārvati. My joy is as unshakable as Meru mountain.

17.

Since your husband has got to depart at dawn, listen to me carefully. He must not see your joy ; you must weep, and keep him ; you must tell him that you have not the courage to stay in a room his absence leaves most desolate ; you must go out to see to his horse, and bid the servant saddle the fastest.

Amores

18.

I told you that I knew how to make you happy.
I said the very old words which put a woman's
fears to sleep. Now your tears smile at me as a
child smiles at a dream.

19.

Birds in all the trees of my garden, will you be
able to imprison my longing in your musical
net? It breaks out towards my lover whom I
have not seen for thirty days. My longing would
hasten and make haste and beat against her per-
fumed breasts, against her scented voice. Hold
it not back, good birds.

20.

She put marguerites into her belt and their
petals closed. 'Oh, what is happening?' she
asked, and I replied: 'You looked at them with
the darkness of your dark eyes and they thought
it night.'

21.

Why have you no pity for my love? The stars
do not disdain the sea. They can admire them-
selves in it.

22.

I was surprised that the nightingale singing in
the little tree did not fly off when I came near it.

A m a r u

I stretched out my arm and touched that flower of music, and it had a broken wing. I am still singing of your beauty, Dayāmati.

23.

That voyaging cloud now strands on the root of the moon and is broken in pieces. O you who shall some day sing this verse, seek to find why I sighed in writing it.

24.

‘I am no fool, and it is useless for you to lie to me. I see the marks of her kisses on your breast.’ But I strain her violently against my heart, removing those marks of indiscretion, and her memory of them.

If so many birds sing in the trees of Kavindā, and if the flowers of Kavindā can never die, if clouds are not known in the sky of Kavindā, dear : you once crossed Kavindā.

26.

‘You lie in my heart,’ you said, and I thought you commonplace. Now I send you a leaf of balm by Gāyatri. Slip it between your tunic and your breasts so that the perfume reaches . . . me.

Amores

27.

Do not speak. Your love words add nothing to my happiness. Do not speak any more. Sit in this sun-ray.

28.

She has come in spite of the tempest. If you had seen the small rain, *Mātrayā*, falling from the tree flowers into her hair and, as if the thread of her pearls had broken, shining upon her breasts. . . .

29.

The snow of loneliness falls on my heart and shivers into white fruit blossom.

30.

The forest held you prisoner, and the trunks of the trees were the bars of your cage, O dawn. The stream sang a more joyous song to you, dawn, and the mosses were softer. But you broke your cage with light, and went away. I think of *Mahādahi* who loved me for a morning.

She is alive no more, and the flowers still appear. O Death, now that you have got this girl how can you find time to go on killing?

32.

The peacocks cried at nightfall and have beaten

A m a r u

their wings and departed. They carried away the last fires of the sun in their proud fans, and the last embers of our love, it seemed to us.

33.

Perfumes of love and smiles of love, O glory of the sun and splendour of the starry night, as set in the balance against death you fulfil my desire no longer ! Girls of Lankā, palm trees of Sārtha, streams of Mārakī, songs of the wind in the cherry trees of Kamala, I say good-bye.

A m o r e s

W o m a n

34.

See how his violence has dispersed my powder of sandal ; I spread it with so much art upon my breasts ! See how tired my lips are still, and how the down of the couch has been soiled beyond all cleansing, and this veil torn in pieces !

35.

Whither are you running, O leaping stranger at the borders of this forest ? Has love let fly you, fair boy arrow, and do you hurtle towards the dwelling of your mistress ? The ground rejects you as the tambourine rejects the ball. Are you drunken with immateriality, trying to catch yourself away from your body ?

36.

I shall go, I shall find a pretext for being away until the twilight. I shall go. As I want time to lick over my happiness, I shall take the long path that passes in front of the fountain, and there I shall tell my comrades that I walk out to see if my father's fields have suffered from the flood. O victorious Love, I shall go, O wild heart !

37.

This is the Winter season of long sleep. I lie down on my couch at twilight and invoke Matha, the god of gilded dreams. I promise offerings and sacrifices and yet I hardly ever dream of Srī Hari. When the storm shakes the walls of my little house, I prefer to lie awake and listen, for the wind walking through the bamboos of my garden says Srī Hari.

38.

‘He sleeps, sleep now in your turn,’ said my women, and they left me. Then, in a drunken fit of love, I brushed the cheek of my young bridegroom with my lips. I felt him tremble, and saw that he had only pretended. I was ashamed at the time, but soon I groaned with happiness.

39.

I now abandon my body to the kisses of the water ; soon to the kisses of the hours. O kisses of the hours, will you also leave a perfume of lustral water upon my spirit ?

40.

Sometimes you can be so fair, O day ; O night, so desolate. Sometimes so sweet, O night ; so torturing, O day. If he means never to come back, I wish you were both dead.

Amores

41.

My father is away on business, and my mother has been out since this morning upon a visit to my invalid sister. Night is falling and I am too young and afraid to stay alone. Come in, O pleasant stranger.

42.

As the branch bends beneath the weight of that bird, so I bend beneath the weight of your love for me ; but when you leave me, I have not the branch's resilience. Yet what does it matter, O bird? Go on singing. I had forgotten that your song would soon cease and that I had not got it yet by heart.

43.

She said over and over very tenderly : ' Come and see my parakeet.' I followed her into the house, but her women spied on us, and she said : ' My parakeet must be in the garden.' He was not under the arbour, for the scent of the jasmine was too strong there. He was not on the bank of the runlet, for a little boy was cutting wood there. We found him at last in a deserted pavilion, on a gilded sofa.

44

We are but three, yet we are four, for Love dances beside us. Night has fallen, but the breasts of Naranī are light for us. The flowers

Amaru

have closed their petals, but the breath of Privā, as she turns near us, is our refreshment. Arahā ! Let us dance our most secret dances, let our feet pleasurably bite this moss ! Move the tress of hair hiding your throat, O Naranī ! Privā, come nearer ! Look upon our bodies, Love, for we are Naranī, Privā, and Domihī. We love, and not even the calling of Night, couched in the forest, can pluck us asunder. Night wishes our plaints to be added to his great murmur, but, arahā !, we will dance till the violet morn ! Not till then will we carry Privā to our dwelling and drink the wine of her sweat. Arahā ! Arahā ! Your belly is like a pool lashed by the storm, O Naranī ! Why are you already dancing the last dance ? And thou, Privā ! Privā ! O Night, we come !

45.

I write this letter by the sufficient moonlight. My friends have called me, but I preferred to stay in this room since it is full of you. I am still weeping. I looked into the garden, and the shadow of a leaf of the bamboo wrote out an unknown word on the blue sand. It may have been your name.

46.

I take a long time in carefully giving a severe fold to my eyebrows, and know how to harden

Amores

my looks. I am an expert in correcting smiles. When my companions rally me, I fasten an absolute silence upon myself. When my heart is like to break, I tighten my girdle. But the success of these things is in the hands of God.

47.

O night, you have often come to me softly and covered my face when it was weeping. A nectar glistens in my cup this evening, and my lover lies upon my breast. Stay with me as long as you will to-night, O night.

This is a Hymn of the Wife of the Buddha :
O first and fairest of all men, O moon-featured !
Your voice is as sweet as the voice of Kalavinka,
the bird whose singing maddened God ! O my
bright husband ! O terror of the armies of the
Sages ! You were born in the heaven of gardens,
eternally sonorous with bees ! Great tree of
learning, sweetest of saviours, O my husband !
Your lips are as purple as the plum, your teeth
like frost, your eyes are lotuses, your skin a rose !
O redolent of flowers ! O my fair season !
O perfume in the chambers of the women better
than jasmine. . . . O Kanthaka, rarest of horses,
whither has he ridden you ?

A m a r u

49.

If you remember my kisses, say my name once very softly as you crush your mistress.

50.

My blood is calling him but he does not come. That dawn does not rise for me. I said to myself that this is life, that this is the lotus-strewn way. O moon, is it your frozen rays that thus devour my breasts? O breeze of the evening, O freshness charged with garden scents, you burn me terribly. My sight is not what it was. I am going to die.

51.

She teaches me all her secrets : that it is better to soak our cheek betel in snow water, that the powdered root of lemon-grass brightens our teeth, that nothing is better than the juice of green strawberries to reaffirm our breasts ; but not how to forget a door I wept outside all night.

Amores

Man and Woman

52.

What is the weather like this morning?

I do not know.

What? You have crossed the village and you do not know?

The land is white with the sun, but I cannot tell whether the day be fine or not until I know if you are gay or sad.

53.

My dear, my very dear, where are you going thus in the black night?

I fly as upon wings to the place where he who is more beautiful than the day awaits me.

And are you not frightened to run alone, my dear, my very dear?

Love with his terrible arrows keeps me company.

54.

Have the cocks sung yet?

The night is still blue above us, and you may sleep.

I have not slept, my eyes were closed but pictures passed beneath my lids.

What did you see, dear lover?

A house white with jasmine under the palm trees of Rāmī, and us there very happy.

Amaru

55.

A fig of delight !

Where ?

A fig of delight ! You cannot see it.

Then tell me where it is.

Between two branches.

This way ?

No.

That way ?

No, no.

Higher ? Lower ?

Lower. But do not move !

You pick it then.

I shall climb up.

O miserable ! Mother ! Mother !

What is the matter, my child ?

Nothing. I nearly fell.

How warm a thing is a fig, Sandati !

I was looking for you.

I have been here a long time.

I am sorry. One of my kids escaped.

You need not lie. I saw you with
Madādari.

I asked her if she had seen my kid.

And you hunted for it together ?

Yes.

A long time ?

Amores

Quite a long time.

That explains why she is walking with such difficulty.

57.

My mother is not up yet. If you wish me to give you that kiss, come through the hedge.

My hands are already bleeding from the thorny branches. Where are you going ?

To fetch my goats.

Your goats ?

They have not eaten since last night, and will enjoy the thorns and the thorny branches. I shall be scolded, but shall have had your kiss.

I fear to be too warm.

My house is by the side of a river, freshness inhabits it.

People would see me if I went to your house, my friend.

My house is in the forest, only the orchids will see you passing.

The orchid would tell the bee, and the bee the parakeet, and he tells everything.

The orchids would be dumb for a long time with ecstasy after you passed.

My mother would see my hair unmade when I got back.

A m a r u

In my mirror you can make your hair again.
It will keep the shadow of your smile for
ever.

I love you and have forgotten how to smile.

59.

You can ask what you will of me. My husband
is far away.

Alas, alas ! I only love the smell of growing
jasmine.

60.

Those love-wetted eyes that shut and half open
like the wings of a dove in lust, that say so
eloquently all that passes, on whom thrice-
fortunate will you fasten them ?

On him who will speak to me of my dear
love.

Amores

Woman and Woman

61.

What did he give you ?

A tortoiseshell lyre, two flocks, and a silver mirror.

How little !

Rather how much ! For he gave me pleasure also.

You are very young.

Is it my fault he only gave you a she-goat and a sour memory ?

62.

He has just left me for ever, but I am brave, and none shall notice my despair. I smile. I am smiling.

Your smile is as sad as the first dawn over a burned village.

63.

The girls washing their clothes make such a wanton babbling that I cannot hear what you say. Come near. Sit on my bed. Now you were saying ? . . . She knotted her arms about my neck, her breath to my breath, and her lips set to mine.

64.

‘ Caress my breasts with your fingers, they are small and you have neglected them. Enough ! Now set your mouth just there immediately.

Amaru

Oh, why have you delayed so long? ' She was stifling her cries in her friend's hair when there came a knocking at the door, and a voice said : ' We are the Washers of the Dead. They told us that someone had died here.' ' Next door at Harivansa's, in the name of God, next door ! . . . No . . . wait. . . . '

He has fifty flocks, his face is of the true plum oval, his body is incomparable. When he rises from bathing in the dark lake it is as the moon merging from the night. You must decide !

You are in a hurry ?

In a great hurry.

Then tell him that he will have to content himself by playing with my hair.

Are you mad ? Why should I tell him that ?

Because this morning Vajuna offered the same sum, and by a bawd not quite too ugly for me to play with.

66.

Who is there ?

It is I, and I have been knocking for a long time.

What is your name ?

Mahādeva, and I know you recognised my voice.

I did, for I was dreaming of you.

Amores

And here I am.
You shall not come in, my dream suffices me.

O Dayāmati, you know everything. Why do youths not look at me? I walk against the wind until my tunic clings to me, but they cross and continue their way. What must I do to show them I am old enough?

You must let them suppose you have been loved already.

How?

Passionately.

I do not mean that. I mean how can I get the youths to notice it?

One day they will see that you no longer walk against the wind, and have draped your tunic into concealing folds.

68.

By the sixty paps of Bhāvitā, I tell you he deceived you with Nārāyanī, and I surprised them. Yesterday he took hold of my breasts by guile. Do you hear that? He took hold of my breasts. Also he kissed me by force this morning and tore my lips.

You lie!

Look at these wounds.

I cannot believe my eyes. I must taste them, taste them. I must taste them.

Amaru

69.

How can you leave that passionate lover to murmur at your door? Alas, alas, he might as well be writing his charming lines upon the sand, since you teach them to your wanton parakeet for fun. The young man is rich, and we have need of money.

70.

And you love him?

Indeed I do.

Do you not know that I also love?

I was afraid so. Now there are two of us to love him. Even if one of us dies he will have a mistress.

You? You die?

We never know.

O Sādahī, star of my day, have you not understood that it is you I love, and that I am jealous?

71.

What did he do then?

He set a pillow of fresh grass under my head and went to fetch the milk.

And you slept?

You are foolish. I rose and broke a branch of dādali and reddened my lips with the sap, I made my lids blue with the juice of the wild plum, I powdered my breasts with the pollen of the giant lotus.

Amores

Observation

72.

He came to tell her that he was leaving her and that he loved another. She wept. He had departed, saying nothing of her new way of doing her hair.

73.

She used to pass singing, but since that very handsome boy caressed her, she does not sing, and all is sad on the road she used to take. Why, Madahī, are you so desolate? Is there only one very handsome boy between the Red Mountain and the sea banks?

74.

He covered her face and her breasts and her arms with kisses, and then went away. Because he did not dare to kiss her mouth, she is passing her lips along her trembling arms now.

75.

A gust of wind will blow open the petals of a poppy that is slow in blossoming. Love suddenly brings the spirit of a girl to flower.

76.

One day young Sītā of Ratnāvali indented this determination upon a rose petal: *The prettiest*

Amaru

boy in all the world. But I will never love him. Love is too cruel. She had just graved the last word when the West Wind carried away the petal.

77.

‘Clumsy!’ said Narati. ‘A fool!’ said Dayāmati, and they both laughed. But Ambati does not tell them that he has the most extraordinary eyes in all the world, and that the blackbird tries to peck at his mouth when he lies sleeping in the garden.

78.

See how these vernal airs, charged with the sunrise water-lily, clear the bright sweat from the forehead of this girl, and tangle her hair, and swell her veil in the fashion of a lover, and give back her strength.

79.

I have come out of doors the better to hear this passionate voice, which is kissing all the fields. It is of a woman, a warm and serious voice, saturate with love; but it has ceased. The nightingales have been dumb to-night.

80.

. . . and those women who have broken their lutes go to dream by the small waters. . . .

Amores

81.

This dancer pleases you, but there are fifteen coveting her. Therefore carelessly drop an incendiary phrase into the conversation, say that the talent of the poet Sadāsa is open to discussion, or that the army of Kāmatrasnu is not invincible. Let it work upon heated nerves, and the walls will soon be shaking. Do not wait until your companions come to blows, but make a sign to the dancer.

82.

He entered the house of his mistress after long journeys, trembling with desire, emotion and impatience. And he found her surrounded by women friends, who took malicious pleasure in prolonging their visit. But she was more eager still, and crying : ‘ Ah, something bites me ! ’ lifted her veil and fanned out the flame of the only torch with it. So that the guests departed.

~ ~ ~

As men speak :

You are imbecile to groan so because she has refused to let you in. Wash away your tears and crown yourself with jasmine petals. Sing one of the native songs of her servant, for the girl is charming, more beautiful than Vadihā. She

A m a r u

will come out at once, and pay you for the rigours of her mistress.

Leave me alone, for I love Vadihā ! Leave me alone !

The servant is very beautiful.

Beauty is not enough.

Her breasts, her legs.

Where does she come from ?

From Mahāpura.

Perhaps she knows my brother, who lives near there. I will sing and bring her out, since you advise it.

I am glad to see you love your brother so. Good-bye.

84.

She remembers the dusk when he swore under the flowering plum tree that he would love her. She remembers his betrayal, his lying, his brutal departure, and rejoices that she has escaped from such a man. But she never sees, save dimly, a branch of the plum tree flowering against the moon.

85.

The chariot of the thunder is crashing over the clouds, it is almost quite dark and here is the rain ! Come and take shelter under my tree, pretty. I invite you for the sake of your new tunic and for the sake of this bird in the branches

Amores

of my tree. He has never seen a man and a girl not take advantage of a storm.' 'Alas, alas, I really must accept your invitation.' But even so the bird soon flew away.

86.

Instead of the deep blue lotus her glance to him, her teeth in a lighted smile instead of the jasmine, instead of the cup one moving breast of hers. Thus, though she has little means, she finds a celebration for his return.

The gold band of princes is about his brow, he has thirty elephants and a hundred servants, his palace is on the bank of the Chandanā, and he weeps to-night. He weeps as a labourer in a rice-field, who sees his crop borne down by the flood of the river. O master of thirty elephants and a hundred servants, you will not frighten Love. Your arrows and cutting-wheels will not frighten Love. So weep.

88.

'Now may Love break my heart in a hundred and fifty-two pieces, put out the fire of my eyes, render me as thin as a harp, if I value that faithless boy more than a last year's nail-paring!'

Amaru

And then she cast an impatient glance along his usual footpath.

89.

‘ You are more beautiful with no veils,’ and he sets an impatient hand upon her girdle. Light grows in the eyes of the young girl, and her women file forth discreetly.

90.

She is young, and has come to sit sadly under a certain cinnamon apple and regard the moon. Her breast is filled with sighs, she falls to weeping and then gives way to sleep. But the wind has listened and makes the cinnamon apple cry down its flowers upon her cheek, so that she dreams that a hand is wiping away her tears.

91.

Bhavāni, Ambālikā and Rohinī mirrored their smiling faces in the water. And Bhavāni, crying : ‘ Oh, I am thirsty,’ leaned over the gold disk which was the face of Rohinī and kissed it as it floated trembling. And Ambālikā must weep.

92.

She looks at the torrent from the mountain where her lover keeps his flock, and says : ‘ Oh, have you seen him, torrent ? ’ But the

Amores

torrent answers with its spumy mouths: 'I have seen the blue sky and the white cliffs.' 'Have you heard the music of a bone flute, O torrent?' 'I have heard the noise of the wind breaking against the rocks.' 'O torrent, have you seen an eagle towering?' 'I have seen an eagle.' 'I am happy, torrent, for you have seen an eagle that saw Sadatta.

93.

O Fire, most mighty except for Indra, O fever of nature! Spilling from the snow mountains, flowing from the stars in shining rounds, Agni, Agni, Agni! You flicker, a thousand lotuses; you twist up iron like rushes; you flame in the heart of dancers, in the blood of gazelles gasping ahead of the hunt, in the arms of clinging lovers! Agni, Agni, Agni!

94.

Her husband committed a small fault, and she recalled the eternal perfidious counsel of her women. She bore herself violently, thinking to frighten him; but he only remembered the unchanging sweetness of a certain girl.

95.

The temple bell has loosed its arrow of sound upon the night, and rapid shadows are passing.

Amaru

That, by the sound of her silver bracelets, is Prithā. And that is Hatānenā of the sad hair. That is Umā, and that is Gautamī. Soon they will come back, each with a consecrated coal in a leaf of nenuphar ; and as ever, because she sets it down in the grass to let herself be kissed, the dew will have quenched Prithā's.

96.

Bhavāni and Prithā are whispering. What are they saying ? Now Prithā runs away. Where is she going ? The little bell noises of her bracelets can be heard no longer. Far down there, see, two girls are scratching each other's faces, and a young man strips the petals from a flower.

97.

Flutes becoming silent, young girls running, broken lilies. A storm.

How should we quench love when there is fire even in the pollen of the lotus under water, even in wet sandal essence, even in the dew of the frozen lantern of the moon ?

99.

She played with her collar of shells. She spoke

Amores

to us of flowers, and her hands were as unsubstantial as a rose petal. She spoke to us of birds, and her voice saddened us more than the crying of a lost bird at night. She spoke of the sun, and her great eyes which had been suns were dimmed to two thin sparks, eaten by the shadow.

100.

O Death with the face of Dawn ! O flower-crowned Death ! O drunken with having held the bodies of every man and every woman in your arms since time began ! Death with sealed lips ! O Death, deaf to the supplication of the fallen dancers ! Charitable to the calling of the Buddhas ! Creative Annihilation ! Death with the face of Dawn !

MAYŪRA

Mayūra

BEFORE YOUR FATHER WAS A YOUTH I WAS a young man, yet I went into the forest when I had seen you, to follow and find the coupling place of the tigers. His feet about the gilded one and his rod flushing out to crimson were as nothing to my youth, who am an old man and a King's poet.

*

A procession of hills no longer impedes me, for I spring over them, and find the flower-covered bow within my hands. I discover under my hand the flowery bow of Kāma, and break large branches out of my path. I have seen you, O daughter of a woman, and I break down branches. I cast great stones from my way.

*

Doubtless the palms of your feet are red with lac; certainly the flowers grow together to check your feet in the forest. The prints of the toes of your feet, as I follow, who am now a young man, are separate and beautiful and red in the dust.

*

Rain scents of the coupling of the trees come to the assembly of poets again. You went to bathe in the river, and I took new interest in the King's stallion. He roared for the quick mares

*

Amores

to be brought to him, he drummed with his fore-legs upon them, O woman moist with a boy's love.

*

A yellow cloud of hornets is about the water-flower, and it is scented as it lies on the tumult of the pool. Your navel is a water-flower and lo ! there is a cloud of saffron hornets about it. It is deep to look within, as if the depth of it had been painted with blue kohl.

Venturing I have seen you raise your garment and press your palms to your ankles, drawing your hands up, as if you were passing them over tall trees. I have been disturbed by your straight sweetness from ankle bone to the flower of your body.

*

Gradually the trees of the new year come down to drink at the river, and you are there washing between your gold thighs. You break the water of the pool into moons by kicking, and then play the fish, going down to kiss the hidden roots of the water-lilies.

No breasts are heavier than these, and yet they are as stable as gourds hardened for wine. Also

Mayūra

there are set impregnable crimson castles on the hills of them.

*

I have been hit about the brow by the many sticks of your beauty, your navel had a stick, your haunches a great stick, your hair a bludgeon. I have fainted at the sight of this woman as a boy faints. Your breasts were two clubs, raining upon my head.

*

Let me come out from the poets' assembly and cast about for the traces of your feet in the dust ; I am more than any tracker since you came to me with wet arms, since you came to me out of the private chamber. Your feet had the appearance of gold with ten rubies. Your eyes were fainting.

*

Rearing the green flame of his tail, the peacock casts the hen beneath him in the dust of the King's walk. He covers her, and we can hardly see her. She cries and he cries ; and the copper moons in the green bonfire of his tail die down ; and I am an old man.

*

As you lay on the palace couch of sea-yellow and showed me lovelinesses, saying that they were unimportant, our King was counting his

Amores

number of gold breastplates and litters woven from bird feathers. I would have made stanzas about your hands.

*

Dust of dead flowers, O tigress, has been spilled smoothly on the body of your breasts. It is a task to praise your breasts, for their tips are gilded like the sun and red like sunset. And I do not know what to think of them.

*

Suavely the wine pouring from your lower lip has called the gold swarm. It is a crimson fruit and has called the bees. The boy who has sucked that carmine fruit is drunken, and I am drunken, and the gilded bees.

*

Early you have plunged as a fire coal into the river pool, the fishes love you, and your breasts displace the water. The demon of the stream, having come down to drink between his tigers, leaps out upon you. He bears you down, and you come up uncooled from the cool river.

*

Now you pout your fruit-red lower lip, O woman with wet hands, to be a comfort to those that thirst. You make me cool with the breathing of your underlip, though crimson lac is afraid before it, and to touch it is annihilation.

Mayūra

*

Old maker of careful stanzas as I am, I am also
as the fishmonger's ass and smell to you in riot.
He is insensate and does not care though the
Royal retinue be passing. He climbs and is not
otherwise contented. And he brays aloud.

*

Rapture disturbed the gold water-hornets, they
were in a cloud about your navel. It was deep
with blue deeps, a flower on the river. It was
cut as if with the three strokes of a sharp sword.
A child with his hand full of musk unguent could
by no means have filled it.

*

Once I told my King that night had fallen, and
he said: 'It is as yet noon.' But I insisted,
proclaiming: 'Night has descended in long
shadows, because that woman has let fall her
most heavy hair.' And he said: 'You are an
old man, Mayūra.'

*

For now I break branches out of my path, seeing
that the palms of your feet are red. The rain
scent of the coupling of the trees comes again
to the poets' assembly, and your
hair is nightfall, and
I am an old
man.

The End.

